

CONTENTS

Next AGI Foundation Meeting 1	Updates from the Geoscience Policy Department 4	AGIF Legacy Society Invites You to Share the Legacy of Geoscience ... 6
From the Executive Director 2	Geoscience Congressional Visits Day 2016.....4	Take Advantage of the IRA Rollover Legislation: You Can Give Far More With Less.. 7
AGIF Updates..... 2	Sinkhole in Des Moines Spurs Visits to AGI Website4	Be part of AGI’s Future — Support the Geosciences Through Planned Giving!..... 7
A Perfect Opportunity to Enhance the Center’s Campaign2	Updates from the Education and Outreach Department 4	The Council on Foundations Opens Doors to AGIF Trustees..... 7
Updates from the Center for Geoscience & Society 3	Earth Science Week Sponsors “One Shared Place” Video Contest5	Current Trustees..... 8
AGI Critical Issues Forum on Groundwater: Lessons From the High Plains Aquifer3	“Earth and Space Science” Helped Support Over 100 Teachers5	
	Earth Science Week Comes to Latin America and the Caribbean6	



Pat Leahy presents Jan van Sant with the AGIF Emeritus Trustee Award.

Andrey Gidaspov/AGIF

NEXT AGI FOUNDATION MEETING

Dan Domeracki, Chair, and P. Patrick Leahy, Executive Director, of the American Geosciences Institute Foundation, extend their invitation to Trustees to attend this first meeting of 2017. The meeting will take place on **Thursday, January 26, 2017, at 5599 San Felipe, 11th Floor, Houston, TX 77056** from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Please RSVP by January 12, 2017 to Leigh Sutherland at (703) 379-2480 extension 203 or the American Geosciences Institute Foundation, 4220 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22302-1507.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Trustees:

As we enter this Holiday season, I'd like to express my deepest gratitude to all of you for another successful year. Each of you helped us make the AGI Foundation a much more engaging, responsive and effective organization. Thank you so much!



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As you know, this year has been challenging for many of our partners and stakeholders: energy markets have been at their lowest, corporate funding for many worthy projects has dropped dramatically while the needs of local communities and educational institutions only increased.

Nonetheless, I'm thrilled to report that, thanks to your continuous support of the AGI's Center for Geoscience and Society, as well as our successful collaboration with AGI corporate, non-profit and government partners, AGI conducted another successful Critical Issues Forum, which addressed changes in regional groundwater resources. Over 50 participants from state, federal, and local agencies, industry and academia joined a vigorous discussion on this important topic. You can learn more about the Forum, as well as other Center activities, in this December issue of the Newsletter.

Finally, I'd be remiss if I didn't highlight another great opportunity for us to solidify the first success of the Center's capital campaign. This past September, we received another generous offer from an anonymous donor providing a matching grant for any donations to the Center at a solid 2 to 1 match. I hope that you will all take advantage of this unique opportunity to multiply your gift and support the Center. Moreover, I also hope that you could help us spread the word about this matching challenge, so that we could invite new partners and supporters to our donor and partnership network. Please help us make new connections for the success of this campaign.

I wish you all a wonderful holiday season, a prosperous 2017, and I hope to see you all in Houston next January!

Pat Leahy
Executive Director

AGIF UPDATES

A PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO ENHANCE THE CENTER'S CAMPAIGN

Last year, AGI launched the silent phase of the fundraising campaign to support the AGI Center for Geoscience and Society (The Center). As you know, its mission is to enhance geoscience awareness across all sectors of society by improving access to geoscience knowledge, engaging the widest possible range of stakeholders and creatively promoting geoscience resources and programs. The Center already has many successful initiatives, some of which are featured in the enclosed materials.

The Trustees have been integral to this effort and we want to once again say "Thank You!" to:

- 1) Each Trustee who has given or pledged financial support to The Center;
- 2) The Development Committee members who worked diligently to articulate the message about The Center and formulate the fundraising strategy.

Thanks to an anonymous gift of \$1 million in honor of Charles Weiner, the Center campaign is off to a good start. So far, we have raised a total of \$1.3M in cash and pledges toward the \$6.5M goal to fund operating expenses of The Center to 2050.

Today, we are thrilled to announce that one of our donors has offered The Center's Endowment Challenge. The Challenge will provide up to \$500,000 by matching one dollar for every two dollars raised for The Center. If we successfully take advantage of this opportunity we can add \$1M, or more, toward the goal.

To maximize our ability to take advantage of the Challenge, we would like to reactivate the Development Committee (DC) to help solicit donations from potential major donors. Since the previous task of the DC was focused on the philosophy and strategy for The Center, instead of soliciting donations, we are opening up membership on the DC to all Trustees who want to help solicit donations. The DC will try to meet briefly by telephone each month to discuss the previous month's progress and the following month's "to do" list. DC members, in conjunction with Andrey Gidasov, the AGIF Development Director, will then pursue the "to do" items. Please notify Andrey at: agidasov@americangeosciences.org if you want to join (or step off of) the DC.

Thank you very much,
AGIF Development Committee

UPDATES FROM THE CENTER FOR GEOSCIENCE & SOCIETY

One of AGI's greatest strengths is its ability to bring together our many partners into new collaborative relationships. One example is the upcoming presentation that will take place at the annual Geoscience Information For Teachers (GIFT) Workshop Program, organized each year by AGI member societies, AGU and NESTA, as part of AGU's annual conference in December. This year, the Director of AGI's **Center for Geoscience and Society**, Ed Robeck, will present a GIFT workshop with others who represent the Einstein Distinguished Teaching Fellowship Program, Oregon State University, the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES) and Google Geo Education. Two of those representatives are past-presidents of NAGT, another AGI member society. The workshop will help teachers bring concepts of remote sensing into their teaching using real-world data, Google Expeditions resources, simulations and scientific visualizations. The workshop will include the use of educational materials on [teaching remote sensing \(https://science.nasa.gov/ems\)](https://science.nasa.gov/ems) and with [scientific visualizations](https://svs.gsfc.nasa.gov/forEducators/Start_Here.html)

(https://svs.gsfc.nasa.gov/forEducators/Start_Here.html) developed by NASA in collaboration with AGI's Center for Geoscience and Society.

Geoscience plays an important role in all of our lives, which is underscored by the many geoscience hazards that can strike. When an earthquake occurred in Ecuador on April 16, the lives of residents in the region were severely disrupted. This included the local schools. Schlumberger reached out to the community through their Project SEED (Schlumberger Excellence in Educational Development) initiative and found it beneficial to have a series of simple and fun science activities that would help students overcome their anxiety about returning to school, and encourage them to focus on learning again. Schlumberger turned to AGI's Center for Geoscience and Society to develop these activities, which are now available online in both English and Spanish in the *Science Play* (www.earthsciweek.org/seed) teaching guides.

AGI CRITICAL ISSUES FORUM ON GROUNDWATER: LESSONS FROM THE HIGH PLAINS AQUIFER

The High Plains (Ogallala) Aquifer underpins the agricultural economy of the High Plains. The aquifer spans eight states from South Dakota to Texas and provides about 30 percent of the groundwater used for irrigation in the United States. Some parts of the aquifer are effectively exhausted for agricultural purposes, however, and it is no longer economical to pump water for agricultural use in parts of Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. The second AGI Critical Issues Forum, *Addressing Changes in Regional Groundwater Resources: Lessons from the High Plains Aquifer*, tackled two questions that link the geosciences to societal consequences by asking how different experts and stakeholders have addressed the depletion of the High Plains Aquifer, and the lessons learned, or best practices developed, from the experience.

Industry and academia spent 1½ days in vigorous discussion. Everyone agreed that groundwater is a vital resource and that accurate geoscience information is essential in any management plan. Each state manages its groundwater differently, but a consistent conclusion was that stakeholder engagement, especially from the agricultural community, is the essential element in any effort to manage groundwater. A report summarizing the Forum will be published in the New Year. In the meantime, you can view many of the slide presentations from the Forum at: www.americangeosciences.org/policy/ci-forum-2016/presentations. The Forum was supported by AGI's Center for Geoscience and Society.

The Payne Institute for Earth Resources at the Colorado School of Mines generously hosted the Forum in Golden, Colorado, on October 27-28. The 53 participants from state, federal and local agencies,



Rex Buchanan gives a Kansas perspective on groundwater at the AGI Critical Issues Forum.

Cassandra Rose/AGI



A very attentive audience at the AGI Critical Issues Forum.

Cassandra Rose/AGI

UPDATES FROM THE GEOSCIENCE POLICY DEPARTMENT

GEOSCIENCE CONGRESSIONAL VISITS DAY 2016

AGI's Geoscience Policy program took a lead role in organizing the 9th Geoscience Congressional Visits Day. On September 14, 2016, 30 geoscientists from 21 states came to Washington where they held 74 visits with Congressional offices. Every participant urged Congress to support strong and sustained federal investment in geoscience in order to support resilient communities, strengthen our global and economic competitiveness, enhance national security, and sustain a highly skilled workforce.

This annual event brings a unified message from the geoscience community to senators, representatives, and their staff stressing the importance of the geosciences and their value to society. The geoscience societies work together to arrange meetings between participants and their elected representatives because the strongest messenger is always a constituent and the best message is one that shows the relevance of the geosciences to individual congressional districts.

To learn more about Congressional Visits Day and the training that the geoscience societies provide, click www.americangeosciences.org/policy/events.

Jessie Holland and Harold Syms about to have a meeting during Geoscience Congressional Visits Day 2016.

Maeve Boland/AGI



SINKHOLE IN DES MOINES SPURS VISITS TO AGI WEBSITE

We saw a sudden spike in traffic to the Critical Issues website in mid-April, and much of the traffic could be traced back to Des Moines, Iowa. After some investigative sleuthing, Leila Gonzales was able to trace the increase back to media reports of a 40-foot-wide sinkhole that opened up in a front yard in Des Moines, swallowing a 35-foot tree. KCCI, one of the local news channels, linked to the [sinkhole](http://www.americangeosciences.org/critical-issues/sinkholes) section of the AGI Critical Issues website (www.americangeosciences.org/critical-issues/sinkholes). We are delighted to see this proof that we are providing the sort of geoscience information that people need.

UPDATES FROM THE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH DEPARTMENT

The Education and Outreach Department (EOD) has begun to work directly with school systems and other partners to enhance our ability to disseminate geoscience education materials, including supplies from AGI's past initiatives that can be put to good use in classrooms. For example, a new partnership developed with the Baltimore Teacher Supply Swap allows EOD to donate materials and supplies that teachers can review and take away for their own use and to share at their schools. This has also included providing materials for dissemination through the wide network of teachers who took part in the **K-5 and Middle School Teacher Leadership Academies**, sponsored by ExxonMobil in Houston each summer. Those teachers help disseminate materials as they organize their own local and regional teacher workshops using what they learned in the academies. These steps are enhancing AGI's ability to have a direct, positive affect in individual classrooms.



AGI education staffers, Celia Thomas and Juliet Crowell, at National Fossil Day.

Juliet Crowell/AGI

EARTH SCIENCE WEEK SPONSORS “ONE SHARED PLACE” VIDEO CONTEST

Earth Science Week sponsored the “One Shared Place” video contest in cooperation with the National Park Service and with funding from TGS and Skild, Inc. The contest, which promoted understanding the important role of the geosciences in everyone’s life, selected winning entries that celebrated “Our Shared Geoheritage,” the theme of Earth Science Week 2016 (www.earthsciweek.org). The event, AGI’s international public awareness campaign to promote the geosciences, reaches over 50 million people a year.

View winning videos and read descriptions on the One Shared Place website (<http://bit.ly/2eKHJlv>), along with information about the other finalist teams. Winning videos also can be seen on the AGI YouTube page (<http://bit.ly/2f04oew>).



AGI's Geoff Camphire speaks at National Fossil Day.

Celia Thomas/AGI

AGI Education department staffer, Celia Thomas, showcases an ESW toolkit.

Juliet Crowell/AGI

“EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCE” HELPED SUPPORT OVER 100 TEACHERS

The fourth cohort of teachers will finish AGI’s online professional development course “Earth and Space Science” in December. With support from Herbert Hunt and the AAPG-Foundation, this course has helped over 100 teachers enhance their ability to provide high quality Earth science instruction. Current teachers have already commented very positively about the course, such as:

“Online courses like this one keep my science practices up-to-date. It is an excellent experience that gives me ideas and resources to use each day. The discussions are especially helpful because I gain ideas from what other teachers are doing with the same resources in their classes. This class perfectly suits my needs of a flexible learning environment and high quality science.”

“PLED 576 is a challenging and interactive online course where teachers can learn, collaborate and share ideas on geoscience and education topics. This course introduced me to the Earth Science literacy principles which I believe are invaluable to any science classroom.”

The course is co-taught by Dr. Rebecca Dodge and AGI’s Mark Carpenter.



EARTH SCIENCE WEEK COMES TO LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

To help support the increasing international presence of AGI's member societies, AGI has launched a number of international projects. In September, Earth Science Week was promoted at a booth at the SEG/AAPG International Conference and Exposition (ICE) in Mexico, and the Director of AGI's Department of Education & Outreach spoke about Earth Science Week at the AAPG Latin America & Caribbean Student — Young Professionals Leadership Summit 2016 that followed ICE. Representatives from eight countries attended. The connections made before, during and after the ICE and Summit led to local groups organizing Earth Science Week activities in at least six countries for the first time.



The entrance to the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, highlighting National Fossil Day.

Celia Thomas/AGI



Dino Twister game and Trackway.

Celia Thomas/AGI

AGIF LEGACY SOCIETY INVITES YOU TO SHARE THE LEGACY OF GEOSCIENCE

Join like-minded colleagues and friends and make plans to support the case of geoscience for future generations. If you'd like to receive more information about planned giving, please contact Andrey Gidaspov at agidaspov@agiweb.org.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE IRA ROLLOVER LEGISLATION: YOU CAN GIVE FAR MORE WITH LESS

There is good news for donors in their 70s — a recent law makes it possible to give individual retirement account (IRA) assets to charity, free from federal tax, annually. Prior to 2006, all lifetime distributions from IRAs were taxed — even those given to charity. As such, you can give far more with less! This may be an attractive giving option for you if you are:

- » Over 70½ and now receiving minimum IRA distributions — but do not need the extra income.
- » Interested in making a significant lifetime gift to impact your community.

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 permitted individuals to roll over up to \$100,000 from an IRA directly to a qualifying charity without being taxed. On December 18, 2015, Congress passed

the PATH Act, making permanent this unique charitable giving opportunity. Single and married individuals 70½ and older are eligible to give in this way from their individual retirement accounts. Using IRA assets to make a gift during your lifetime, as opposed to giving via bequest in your will, enables you to experience the joy of making a major gift.

Example: Mr. Smith, age 75, has accumulated approximately \$2,000,000 in his IRA accounts. He has other sources of wealth and has plans to leave a sizable estate to his heirs and charity. Under this law, Mr. Smith can create a fund at the community foundation to address the causes he cares about most by transferring IRA funds tax free. Mr. Smith can transfer up to \$100,000 in 2015. In addition, if Mr. Smith is married, his wife can also make similar gifts from her IRA accounts, impacting the community in ways personal, unique and enduring.

BE PART OF AGI'S FUTURE — SUPPORT THE GEOSCIENCES THROUGH PLANNED GIVING!

Your planned gift can support the vital work of AGI while helping you achieve your personal, financial and estate planning goals. Your planned gift — of any size — will help ensure AGI's ability to continue its work in supporting the geosciences. You can choose from many planned giving options on the AGIF website: www.agifoundation.org/planned-giving.

THE COUNCIL ON FOUNDATIONS OPENS DOORS TO AGIF TRUSTEES

Earlier this year, AGIF joined the Council on Foundations (COF). With over 65 years of experience supporting grantmakers of all sizes and types, the Council remains the foremost, largest and most comprehensive source of philanthropic resources, tools and professional development. The Council on Foundations connects members with others in philanthropy and with effective resources, strengthens our capacity to impact community, and advances the philanthropic sector and a culture of charitable giving in the U.S. and globally.

AGIF membership in the Council provided an opportunity for our trustees to access the Council's services. If you are interested in this option, you can create a log-in by going to www.cof.org and clicking on "Login." You will be given a prompt to create a log-in, and within a day, COF staff will make sure it is properly linked to AGIF membership so that you can get full access to the site as well as receive any discounts on registration, or purchases to which AGIF membership entitles you. Alternatively, you may find it easier to simply write to membership@cof.org.

ABOUT THE AGI FOUNDATION

MISSION

Established in 1984, the AGI Foundation...

Supports educational, scientific and charitable activities that benefit the geoscience community, member societies and associates of the American Geosciences Institute, the public at large and assists the Institute in seeking funding support for specific programs and endowments and in developing partnerships with corporations, private foundations and other funding organizations.

CONTACT AGIF

AGI Foundation
P. Patrick Leahy
AGIF Executive Director
c/o American Geosciences Institute
4220 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22302
agif@agifoundation.org
www.agifoundation.org
Tel: (703) 379-2480

Please send comments or inquiries to:
agidaspov@agiweb.org

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