

History of the Arizona Section of AIPG

By Barbara H. Murphy, Dawn Garcia, Erick Weiland, and David Palmer

The beginning of the Arizona Section appears to be credited to Bill Greenslade, Walt Heinrichs, Ben Dickerson, Ted Eyde, Paul Manera, and Richard Hahman. In some of the Section's archival records (those boxes that are passed along each year and are seldom purged of extraneous material), there is a letter referencing some of the early beginnings. Bill Greenslade was at a meeting with Walt Heinrichs in February 1975 regarding an Arizona legislative issue and at this meeting Bill and Walt discussed some ideas about forming an Arizona section of AIPG; Walt followed up with a letter in March 1975 to Bill and others to solicit thoughts and to investigate the feasibility of an Arizona Section of AIPG. The earliest record of the Section is from a copy of the Bylaws of the Arizona Section. According to the Preamble "WHEREAS, there are now ten or more Members of the Association who reside within the State of Arizona and who desire to organize an Arizona Section...." The Section was established on November 9, 1977. The adoption of the bylaws was certified by Paul Manera and endorsed by Richard Hahman.

In the early years, the AZ Section hosted the 12th Annual National meeting at the Sheraton Pueblo Inn in Tucson in October of 1975 (the Section didn't even officially exist yet). The committee members who organized the meeting included Chairman Walt Heinrichs, Jim Sell, Lyman Hart, Woody Simmons, Jim DeCook, Don Williamson, Dick Thomssen, Al Perry, Ted Eyde, Stan Keith, Ben Dickerson, and Bill Greenslade. About 200 people attended and Ted Eyde is credited with almost single-handedly putting the program together. The general program theme was "Geologists – Tell It Like It Is – to the Public, Our Lawmakers and Ourselves". Jean Heinrichs organized the ladies activities. The "wives" went shopping in Nogales – there must have been very few woman geologists anticipated at the meeting (times have certainly changed). Profits from the annual meeting helped establish the Arizona Section. The annual meeting included a field trip to Twin Buttes Mine. The meeting was deemed as "one of the best ever".

Arizona was an early pioneer in the registration of geologists, starting in 1958, prior to the formation of AIPG. In the later part of the 1970s, there was a lot of activity focused on registration of geologists in the State and the registration exam. The examination used for registration was administered by the Arizona Board of Technical Registration (ABOTR) that, at the time, did not even have a geologist on its board. The ABOTR's exam at that time was written by university faculty, had essay questions mostly related to academia and not practicing geologists. The exam was determined invalid by a psychomatrition. The section offered itself to the ABOTR to assist in developing a valid exam and the adoption of a nationally-accepted exam. This offer was accepted. The Arizona Section began work on developing a valid geological registration exam. Ed Dapples, Dick Rush, Bill Greenslade, Ralph Weeks, Frank Turek, Erick Weiland, Steve Noel, Bill Wellendorf, and Jim Furlow were involved in the early stages of developing a valid exam. These exam questions were part of the early stages in the development of a National exam – ASBOG- that began in October 1992. The Section also successfully worked through the legislature to have a position on the ABOTR specifically for a geologist. Bill Greenslade, Jim Furlow, Dick Rush, Ralph Weeks, Joe Rominger, and Paul Manera were some of the people instrumental in these efforts.

In 1985 the Arizona Board of Regents voted to no longer allow credit for earth science as a laboratory science course for students enrolling in the Arizona university system. As a result, school system began dropping earth science as a course offering. AIPG prepared a position paper in support of earth science education, obtained endorsements from other professional societies,

and eventually had the decision reversed. Earth science classes gained equal standing with chemistry, biology, and physics. Erick Weiland helped lead the effort.

The AZ section hosted a very successful National AIPG meeting in Flagstaff in October 1994. The committee members included Chairperson Dale Nations, Mike Greeley, Bill Greenslade, Larry Fellows, Steve Noel, Lisa Worthington, Dave Kirchner, Erick Weiland, Barbara Murphy and Gary Hix. We even had John Wesley Powell give a talk about his trip down the Colorado River. The field trip to the Grand Canyon included snow! AIPG national chose to hold the annual meeting in Flagstaff again in 2008 with Barbara Murphy serving as general chairperson in conjunction with two other organizations (Arizona Hydrological Society and International Professional Geology Conference). Once again Flagstaff and the attractions of northern Arizona provided a beautiful backdrop for field trips and the meeting events. The meeting was very successful.

In 1985 our State Geologist, Larry Fellows, asked the Arizona Section to conduct a review of the activities of the Geological Survey Branch of the Arizona Bureau of Geology and Mineral Technology. Ralph Weeks chaired the committee and other members included Frank Turek, Ken Euge, Walter Heinrichs, and Dale Nations. The committee produced a splendid report that was influential in getting the Geological Survey Branch removed from the University of Arizona and established as the Arizona Geological Survey (AZGS). Larry Fellows was State Geologist and Director of AZGS from 1979 to 2005, and was followed by Lee Allison. Both have been active members of the AIPG Arizona Section.

The AZ Section established a committee (Alan Coope, Dawn Garcia, Walter Heinrichs, and Erick Weiland) to perform a review of the activities of the Arizona Geological Survey relative to the agency's mission. The results were published in November 1997 and have been very useful for budget and continuance issues with the State legislature. The AZGS faces Sunset Review every 10 years as part of the legislative process and annual budget reviews. AIPG members continue to offer letters and testimony of support to the State legislature. AZ Section members have also offered letters of support and testimony for the Arizona Department of Mines, US Geological Survey, and at the Congressional Subcommittee on Mines and Mining.

In the early days – the late 1970s – early 1980s, it appears that most of the AIPG meetings were focused on Section business issues and were held in Casa Grande, sort of a central meeting point between Phoenix and Tucson. This was a compromise because the Phoenix meetings were poorly attended by Tucsonans, and vice versa (The Casa Grande meetings were poorly attended by both those from Phoenix and Tucson!). Practically the only thing we discussed for several years was the geology exam. We worked closely with the psychometrician to prepare good questions and to review and modify those that exam-takers appeared to have the most problems with. Smaller, focused committees completed a lot of work. In the mid-1980s our section meetings included the business meetings but also more technical speakers and presentations on regulatory/legislative issues. We began having more field trips to entice our members to meetings and to have our members share information in their areas of expertise. It also was a great way to see the geology of Arizona. We began including spouses, children, and friends on our field trips. For many of us, the weekends were a time to spend with family after long hours at work and so some of the AIPG meetings included family. It was also viewed as a way to promote the understanding of what a geologist does. This has continued to the present and has promoted a broader participation from our members.

Some of our memorable field trips include: several trips to the Grand Canyon area, Roosevelt Dam, the mining town of Jerome and the Verde Valley, Cottonwood, the Pinacates volcanic field in northern Mexico, the unforgettable "field trip from hell" across the San Bernadino volcanic field in southern Arizona with 3 flat tires and walking what seemed to be miles across lava flows covered with waist-high burrs and jumping Cholla cactus, dormitory camping in Portal near Chiricahua National Monument, Sedona, the Holbrook sinkholes and potash deposits, Meteor Crater, Tucson Mountains, Phoenix Mountains, Bisbee mining area, the Herradura gold mine in northern Mexico and San Pedro River, and working with paleontologists near Safford.

Our other tradition for many years has been an annual meeting held in February in conjunction with the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show, the world's largest show and sale of rocks, minerals, gems, and related fun geologic items. For many of these meetings, National Executive Committee members and colleagues visiting from other states have joined us for our dinner social, a business meeting at the AZGS, and then our trip to the gem and mineral show. Larry Fellows and more recently, Lee Allison, our State Geologist and Director of the Arizona Geological Survey kindly allowed us to use their agency meeting room for our annual business meeting. They also provided updates on what's happening with geology in the State of Arizona.

The Arizona Section has prided itself on a commitment to serving at the National AIPG level as well with the following members elected to national office: Dale Nations (Editor and Vice President), Lisa Worthington (Advisory Board), Frank Turek (Advisory Board), Dave Palmer (Advisory Board and Secretary), Dawn Garcia (Advisory Board) and Barbara Murphy (Advisory Board, Vice President, and President in 2012).