

History of the Michigan Section of AIPG

On November 17, 1976, Michigan members of the Association of Professional Geological Scientists, as we were then known, met to organize the Michigan Section. Bylaws were proposed and subsequently sent to the Michigan members for adoption. On December 10, 1976 the adopted bylaws and a petition for approval signed by ten members were transmitted to then Executive Secretary Arthur Brunton. These were accompanied by a request from C.E. (Chip) Prouty that they be reviewed and approved at the forthcoming January 8, 1977 Executive Committee meeting to be held in Oklahoma City. That done, the Michigan Section of AIPG was off and running.

The petition signatures of that initial effort, read like a who's who of geology in Michigan. These include many well known geologists in industry, consulting, academia and government. Jeff Sutherland, Don Malott, Bob Minning, Michael Jaron, Peter Hudec, Chip Prouty, George Gallup, Andy Mazola, Merlin Johnson and Richard Bissel. By the time the National directory was published in 1977, the Michigan Section included 23 names from all over the state.

Prior to that meeting and those efforts, little documentation remains although it is clear that Michigan members of the APGS were active in statewide professional affairs. At least one effort was made in 1972 to effect registration which was followed by further attempts in future years. However some dichotomy existed between the membership which was primarily environmental geologists and consultants and geologists in mining, energy and regulatory fields. Registration was simply not a possibility in that context.

Over the next few years following the 1976/1977 approval of the Michigan Section Bylaws, growth brought the membership ranks to 50-60 where it remained until the 1990's. Meetings were moved around the state to make it easier for members to attend them and meeting topics ranged from technical to regulatory affairs to technology. Field trips and social gatherings were occasionally held. Michigan Section activities also included active liaison activities with the National Water Well Association (NWWA, now NGWA), Michigan Well Drillers, Association of Engineering Geologists (AEG) and others. In the 1970's much of the geologic work effort was focused on water supply and wastewater treatment issues with the emerging land application technology for wastewater treatment. In the 1980's environmental investigation and remediation gained greater popularity with implementation of enhanced federal and state regulations.

In the early 1990's, efforts directed to the legislature were redoubled to ensure the geologist and hydrogeologist were recognized within the statutes related to environmental affairs. The inclusion of AIPG's CPG as an indicator of competency for those seeking Michigan's Certified Underground Storage Tank Professional, or CP, status brought a flood of applications and the Section's ranks doubled, then tripled and quadrupled, in just a few short years. As of 2013, the Michigan Section is about 450 strong, and includes CPG's, Professional/Young Professional Members, Associates and Student Adjuncts in three Student Chapters across the state.

Meetings have grown from a few individuals in those early days to quarterly meetings that often exceed 50-75 attendees. In 2007, the Michigan Section hosted AIPG's annual meeting in Traverse City with then record attendance. Since that event, our activities have included an annual golf outing, family friendly weekend field trips in the summer, and cooperative participation with other professional organizations in and around Michigan. We sponsor an annual scholarship poster contest and a K-12 earth science educational grant. The last two years we have participated jointly with Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality to present timely seminars updating professionals on changes in policy, statute, and procedures.

Michigan Section of AIPG brought together many of the leaders in the geologic profession in our state's history during the time of the enhanced environmental and scientific expansion of the 1970's. Today the Michigan Section endeavors to carry on their tradition of competence, integrity and ethics that comprise the professionalism for which we strive.