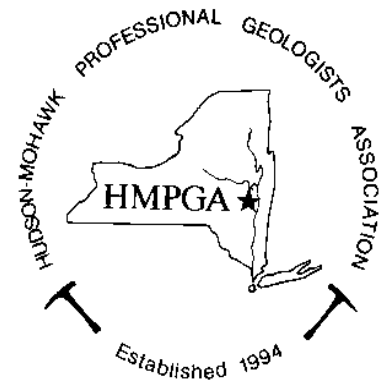


Hudson-Mohawk Professional Geologists' Association

November Newsletter

www.hmpga.org



November 15, 2006

Energy and the Environment: An Overview of NYSERDA's Environmental Program Control

Speaker: Amanda Stevens

Abstract: The NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) created the Environmental Monitoring, Evaluation, and Protection (EMEP) program in 1998. The EMEP program focuses on energy-related environmental issues that are policy-relevant, particularly to New York State.

The EMEP program is committed to improving scientific understanding of electricity-related environmental issues, from pollution in the environment to mitigating impacts, to improving environmental quality.

EMEP also works to increase the understanding of the role of local versus regional sources of air pollution in New York State in order for more equitable control strategies to be developed.

EMEP is also developing an aggressive communication and outreach policy to further support the goal of science-policy integration and to ensure that findings of the research program are adequately disseminated among interested parties.

Since the program's inception, EMEP research, solicited from top scientists, has affected policy on both the state and federal levels and furthered the sciences of the environment and public health. EMEP looks forward to research that will serve as the scientific basis for future New York State initiatives.

About the Speaker

Amanda Stevens is a Project Coordinator in the Environmental Monitoring, Evaluation, and Protection (EMEP) Program at the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). She has a Bachelor's degree in Geology from Hartwick College and is currently finishing her Master's degree in Seismology from SUNY Binghamton. Before beginning work at NYSERDA in May 2006, Amanda was an intern in the Environmental Protection Bureau of the NYS Attorney General's Office, where she worked on issues related to Climate Change.

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HMPGA sponsors, coordinates, and participates in events to help educate the community and its members with respect to geological or geotechnical issues. Events include regular meetings with evening dinners and guest speakers. Other events include workshops, short courses, or field excursions. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions for our organization, please contact a HMPGA Officer or Board Member.

November's Meeting and Event Information:

When: November 15, 2006

Schedule:

Calaway Grill
The Saratoga Room
(attached to the Wingate Hotel)
661 Albany Shaker Road, Colonie

Board Meeting	4:30pm
Social Hour	5:00pm
Dinner	6:00pm
Program (free)	7:00pm

Dinner:

\$10.00/person for student members
\$20.00/person for members
\$22.00/person for non-members

Notes:

Vegetarian or fish meals are available with prior request. Individual will be responsible for the cost of dinner unless a cancellation notice is received 24 hours prior to the meeting. Walk-ins will be charged an additional \$2.00.

Reservations: Reservations are required for dinner attendance. Call or e-mail Diane Welch at (518) 348-6995 or dwelch@alphageoscience.com by noon on **November 15, 2006**. Please register even if you are only attending the Program.

Thank you in advance!



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings – I hope everyone is enjoying their fall. October is in the books, the leaves are disappearing fast, and we're barreling toward the end of 2006. We had a great joint meeting with the NE-AIPG on October 18th at the New York State Museum in Albany, and much of the thanks go to Laurie Scheuing for her efforts behind the scenes. We're very fortunate to have dedicated members like Laurie who selflessly apply themselves to making our events a reality. As I've noted in previous messages, our membership is the key. Of course, Bill Kelly and the Museum staff should also be recognized for their gracious support – the Museum is one of my favorite venues in the Capital District, and there's something almost mischievous about being able to eat and drink in such an environment. If only I could find another piece of that German Chocolate Cake!

Prior to the October 18th joint meeting, **Sam Gowan**, **Marjory Rinaldo-Lee**, and **Jeff Loney** gave us more detailed insights into the continuing efforts to effect licensure for geologists in New York State. As I mentioned in last month's message, the target of our efforts is within Assembly Speaker Silver's office, and NYSCPG's lobbyist, **Rich Leckerling** of Whiteman, Osterman and Hanna, will be concentrating his efforts on breaking the logjam. On behalf of the HMPGA membership, I thank these dedicated individuals for their tireless efforts on this front.

Our Earth Science Week picture/essay contest entries are in, and they're being evaluated by several of the Board members, including me. Though we haven't yet awarded the prizes for the three age groups, I must say that the students did a great job, with the drawn entries outpacing the written ones by a healthy margin. The majority focused on being good stewards of the planet; the now-familiar mantra of reduce, reuse, recycle was a central theme for many of our budding citizen scientists. As I mentioned in last month's message, we plan to enhance our efforts to reach out to the greater Hudson/Mohawk community through contacts with area schools. At several of our Board meetings, we've discussed the nature and content of potential outreach efforts, and the general consensus is that, through our collective professional experience, we have a great deal to offer the local academic community. As many of you have (or know) school-age children, consider volunteering some of your time to speak to a class. More on this topic in the very near future.

Our November speaker will be **Amanda Stevens** of **NYSERDA** – she'll provide us with an overview of NYSERDA's Environmental Monitoring, Evaluation and Protection program, which has been in place since 1998. December's meeting will be our annual **Holiday Gathering**, to be held at the Calaway Grill in Latham, and the January 2007 meeting will feature **Doug Burns** of the USGS, who'll be speaking to us about acid rain and its ecosystem effects in New York State. We have the balance of the Spring 2007 speakers generally in place, but are working with the individual speakers to pin down specific dates. The Spring 2007 short course is shaping up to be a combination field trip/talk centered around Howe Caverns and Cobleskill Stone Products' nearby quarry operations. More on this in next month's newsletter.

Our membership renewals are in pretty good shape, but we still have a few stragglers, so if you're among them, please renew ASAP. A current membership form is available on our website at <http://www.hmpga.org/2006%20-%202007%20membership%20form.pdf>.

Hope to see you on November 15th at the Calaway Grill!

Ted Loukides

(Ted Loukides is a Mineral Resources Specialist with the NYSDEC's Division of Mineral Resources in Albany)



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The **Annual New York State GIS Conference**, held in October, was yet another successful event sponsored by SUNY's College of Science and Forestry.

This year, Talbot Brooks and Twyla McDermott discussed their key assistance to hurricane Katrina rescue operations. Both demonstrated GIS techniques used to analyze the storm surge and power outages, and discussed other issues related to timely map production for missing persons reports and calls for service during the incredible time. They also painted a picture of the efforts from the "brain bus," where volunteers worked non-stop at 12 workstations to provide timely information to decision-makers and rescuers. All worked as a team to that made a difference and helped so many.

Next year's Conference will be held on October 1-2, 2007, at the **Holiday Inn**, on Wolf Road in Colonie!

Visit nysgisconf.esf.edu for details.

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ASCE GEOTECHNICAL GROUP BREAKFAST MEETING

Date: Tuesday November 7, 2006

Place: Best Western on Wolf Road in Albany

Time: 8:00am

RSVP: Ben Rosenthal (518) 852-7766 by Thursday November 2, 2006

Presented by: Sam Gowan, PhD

Senior Geologist

Alpha Geoscience

The Cause of the Retsof Salt Mine Collapse and the Mechanism of Sinkhole Formation above the Mine Level Collapse.

The eventual loss of the 11.2 square mile Retsof Salt Mine from flooding was initiated by a mine level collapse on March 12, 1994. This collapse involved a magnitude 3.6 earthquake, the collapse of a small-pillar panel, an initial inrush of gas and brine, and the ultimate flooding of the mine with fresh water. The collapse is associated with a change in the mining method to the use of yielding pillars; however, the available data indicate that a pressurized brine pocket may have existed above the mine. Geologic, geophysical, geochemical and historical data were used to evaluate the pressure anomaly. Sinkholes, one with a maximum dimension of 600 ft across and 70 feet deep, developed at the land surface 1,100 ft above the mine. These sinkholes destroyed New York State Route 20A. Understanding the mechanism of sinkhole formation was necessary to assess if the sinkholes and geologic units had stabilized sufficiently to reconstruct the Route 20A bridge.



~ A Note about New State Superfund Regulations

On October 25, 2006, the NYS Environmental Board met and approved revised Part 375 regulations, which control the State Superfund program for inactive hazardous waste sites, the Environmental Restoration Program (the former Clear Water/Clean Air bond act projects), and the Brownfields Cleanup program that was first enacted in law in 2003. Subpart 1 of these revised regulations includes elements and requirements that are common to all 3 programs, including definitions and restrictions on who can perform the work.

Much of the work described in these new regulations must be performed by a "Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP)" which "means a person who possesses sufficient specific education, training, and experience necessary to exercise professional judgment to develop opinions and conclusions regarding the presence of releases or threatened releases to the surface or subsurface of a property or off-site areas, sufficient to meet the objectives and performance factors for the areas of practice identified by this Part."

A QEP must also meet one of two additional criteria: (1) hold a current professional engineer's or a professional geologist's license or registration issued by the State or another state, and have the equivalent of three years of full-time relevant experience in site investigation and remediation of the type detailed in this Part; or (2) be a site remediation professional licensed or certified by the federal government, a state or a recognized accrediting agency, to perform investigation or remediation tasks consistent with Department guidance, and have the equivalent of three years of full-time relevant experience." (See 375-1.2(ak) in the new regs that are posted on the DEC website if you want more details.)

The NYSDEC also issued a "Response to Comments" document that explains how each comment was considered and used to revise the regulations, or leave them unchanged. Among the Responses to 375-1.2(ak) is the statement that the definition of a "qualified environmental professional" is "modeled after the definition used in conjunction with the all appropriate inquiry and ASTM Standard 1527-05. During the Q&A period during the technical briefing, Dale Desnoyers, the director of the Division of Environmental Remediation for the NYSDEC, also confirmed that New York will recognize licenses and certifications from other states for QEP's.

Hopefully this will help to bolster our arguments in favor of licensing for geologists, since so many of New York's environmental cleanup programs now require this.




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Kernan Davis tells about the October 18th Dinner Meeting at the New York State Museum

Memories It was dusk when my wife and I crossed Madison Avenue, passed through an automatic door, turned right and entered the Adirondack Wilderness. Among the trees, beyond the static lumberjacks, I recognized some faces, now older than I remember them being. Of course, I was older, too. It has been several years since my retirement. At this meeting, I was not a member geologist, but the guest of a member geologist – my wife, Liz Dobson-Davis.

We ate dinner at a table by a big yellow quarry truck, with some of my former colleagues and enjoyed picking up on our usual banter. Yes, I do remember when the Retsof mine collapsed.

Oh, by the way, I added, did you know that 'Retsof' is 'Foster,' spelled backwards?

"No."

"Really?"

"So what?"

"Where do you get these ideas?"

In 1883, a group of New York City capitalists, including William Foster, Jr., formed the New York Rock Salt Company. Soon, a small village of mine workers formed nearby. Foster declined when people wanted to name the hamlet in his honor. However, people turned Foster's name around and created Retsof. It sounded Russian, which was good for a salt mine name. I promised those at the table that I would not bring it up during the meeting, but I never said that I would not write about it later.

Mystery Dr. Sam Gowan's presentation about the Retsof Mine collapse and the effort to control the escaping brine resounded like an old fashion mystery story; the ones I used to listen to as a boy – how I do love a mystery. Things got especially exciting when he talked about the expansion of the mine diggings toward the Genesee Valley. "Oh, no," I thought, "Disaster looms!" Was it his skillful tone of delivery, or was it a foreboding that rose out of my own experiences with the terrain of Central New York?

Why worry about extending the diggings eastward toward the valley? Because, in homogeneous terrane, valleys develop where the rock is more vulnerable to weathering and erosion; where it is more cracked. Sam likened the drift-filled Genesee Valley to a Finger Lake Valley. I could see that, and remembered riding in a small aircraft over the region. From the sky, the hills between the lakes looked like the fingers and the lakes and rivers seemed to fill the cracks between the fingers – the solid and the not-so-solid.

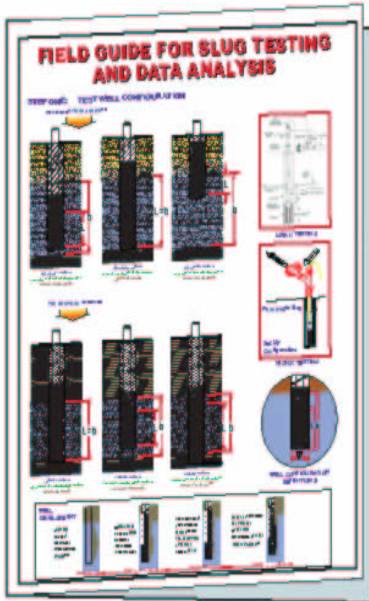
Even though the Genesee Valley now has subtle relief, it used to have greater depth and steep walls. Jointed rock used to have plenty of time to develop relaxation cracks. So, one would expect less competent rock closer to the former valley walls. Sam's pictures inside the mine showed floor pop-ups and ceiling collapses, which occurred prior to the big one. I suggest these resulted from additional local relaxation of stresses in the joint system that led to valley development. Who knows? Just my guess.

I really enjoyed following the trail of the many challenges that Sam and his troop faced and mastered. Things seem to have come under control. But, with Nature, you never know.

More? Some of my former colleagues suggested that I write a brief column for each issue of this newsletter, dredging up some old stories and boasts from my checkered career. After all, once upon a time I worked in the Army's Engineer Strategic Intelligence Division, and just ahead of the bulldozers building the Nagara Power Project, not to mention doing stuff in Alaska, the Genesee River Basin and in just about every corner of New York State. In all those places, I had fun; funny things happened, and I found many mysteries – big and small, geological and psychological, too. Let the editor know if you want to read them.

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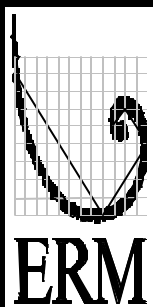
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Hydrogeologist I

This position provides technical support to the hydrogeology division and involves a high percentage of field work that usually requires working under a hazardous site health and safety plan. The Hydrogeologist works directly with the Geoservices Department but may be assigned to other groups (e.g., construction observation).

Field work may include observation of drilling operations, including the installation of monitoring and groundwater recovery wells, collection and field classification of soil and rock samples, and conducting various field tests. Other field work may include groundwater and soil sampling, water level measurements, in-situ hydraulic conductivity tests, assistance with performance of aquifer tests, or other tasks, as assigned.

Office work may include field data reduction, including the preparation of boring logs, hydraulic conductivity calculations and computer entry of various field and analytical data. The Hydrogeologist may also provide data interpretation, including preparation of maps and cross-sections and the preparation of brief sections of report text.

Eligibility requirements:

The position requires a Bachelors degree in Geology or Hydrogeology, detailed understanding of geologic principles, and a general awareness of groundwater flow and environmental concepts. Must be highly organized, reliable, able to work well with others, and possess good communication skills. Willingness to travel frequently and to work in a physically rigorous field setting. Must be sufficiently fit to be able to perform physical work while wearing an air-purifying respirator.

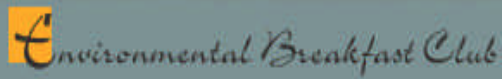
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CAPITAL DISTRICT BREAKFAST CLUB PRESENTATIONS:

The Capital District Environmental Breakfast Club is an informal group of environmental professionals that meets monthly to discuss current environmental issues. Each meeting features a speaker on a topic of interest, a regulatory update, and an open forum. Meetings are held on the first Friday of each month except July and August.

The Environmental Breakfast Club meets at the Holiday Inn Turf on Wolf Road in Colonie, New York. Meetings start at 7:30 am. The cost is \$12 per person which includes a full breakfast buffet.

November's Topic of Discussion: To be Announced. Check out the Website for Details!

You can find out more details about the Capital District Environmental Breakfast Club at their website: www.youngsommer.com/CM/Custom/TOCEnvironmentalBreakfastClub.asp



Buffalo Association of Professional Geologists (BAPG)

The BAPG conducts regular membership meetings on the third Wednesday of the month, January through June and September through November. Meetings feature distinguished speakers and interesting topics. Field trips and technical seminars sponsored by the BAPG encourage the exchange of scholarship and expertise.

Visit www.bapg.org for more information!



Central NY Association of Professional Geologists (CNYAPG)

The CNYAPG conducts regular meetings on the second Thursday of each month from September to May. Meetings feature dinner and distinguished speakers whose presentations invite comment and discussion.

Visit www.cnyapg.org for details!



LONG ISLAND ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL GEOLOGISTS

The Long Island Association of Professional Geologists (LIAPG) is a not-for-profit professional organization dedicated to the professional and business needs of geologists located in the Long Island / Metro New York area.

To contact members or view upcoming events sponsored by the LIAPG, go to their website: www.lipg.org



AIR AND WASTE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (AWMA) NORTHEAST SECTION:

The Mid-Atlantic States Section of the Air and Waste Management Association (MASS-A&WMA) is a professional non-profit association of engineers and scientists working in the environmental field, with a particular focus on issues related to air and waste. The Association strives to provide an opportunity to enhance the profession by providing opportunities for its members to network with other professionals.

November 15th Noontime Discussion: A Brownfields Success in Poughkeepsie

Visit the AWMA website for information on professional activities and updated news!

www.mass-awma.net



THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA (GSA)

The GSA strives to be a leader in advancing the geosciences, while enhancing the professional growth of its members, and promoting the geosciences in the service of humankind.

Discover events and information on their website: www.geosociety.org



The **New York State Museum** is a major research and educational institution. It is dedicated to promoting inquiry and advancing knowledge in the fields of geology, biology, anthropology, and history, through the investigation of material evidence germane to New York State's past, present and future.

For information on upcoming exhibits visit: www.nysm.nysed.gov.



New York State Council of Professional Geologists

*The **NYSCPG** strives to strengthen and advance the geologic sciences as a profession, promote the protection of public health and welfare and the environment through the professional practice of geologic sciences, and create high standards of ethical conduct among its members and within the profession of geology, as well as the legal standing of geologists and their ability to practice geology in New York State by promoting the licensing of geologists in New York State through statutory regulation.*

To learn more about supporting the licensure of professional geologists in NYS, visit: www.nyscpge.org



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