



NORTH-CENTRAL SECTION THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Report to Council, October 2015

The annual report provides a summary of the past few years' accomplishments and the coming years' plans, summarized for the most part under the topical headings of the Section's Strategic Plan.

Summary, the State of the Section:

Membership in the North-Central Section stood at 3,333 voting members at the end of December, 2014. The Section is the fourth largest of the seven GSA Sections.

In 1990, the North-Central Section Management Board initiated a long-range planning effort to enhance meeting quality and marketing, which has generally been successful. Since 1990, meeting attendance has averaged well over 600 (this includes joint-meeting attendance figures) and because of this, and the fiscal prudence of local committees, revenues from meetings usually have increased. The 2008 section meeting in Evansville, Indiana, had 574 registrants. A 2009 meeting in Rockford, Illinois, had 608 registrants, the largest number of attendees since the extremely successful Minneapolis meeting in 2005. The 2010 joint meeting with the South-Central Section in Branson, Missouri, had 828 registrants, and the 2011 joint meeting with the Northeastern Section in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, had 1,603 registrants. The 2012 meeting in Dayton, Ohio, had 558 registrants; the 2013 meeting in Kalamazoo, Michigan had 476 registrants. The 2014 meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska had 401 registrants. The 2015 meeting in Madison, Wisconsin at the beautiful Monona Terrace had 706 registrants (including 314 professionals, 330 students including 47 student volunteers).

For future meetings, a 2016 meeting (50th Annual meeting!) in Champaign, Illinois, and a joint meeting with the Northeastern Section in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 2017 are confirmed, venues contracted, and local committees formed or forming. For 2018, Iowa State is preparing a proposal to host the 52nd Annual meeting.

The financial security of the Section remains sound due to the fiscal prudence of the committee running the 2015 meeting in Madison, which had a net income of over \$27,000. Total section revenue was \$110,145 and expenses were \$103,803 (including meeting expenses, grants and awards, and transfers to the Section endowment held by the GSA Foundation). The operating account balance at the end of the 2014-2015 fiscal year was \$114,240, exceeding the Management Board's target of having assets approximately equal to the cost of one typical-sized annual meeting plus operating costs, and of providing stability and ensuring continuity of Section activities. Support for student programs comprises the vast majority of all expenditures (other than spring meeting costs) of the Section.

For perspective, in recent years the dues income for the Section has covered the general operating costs of the Section, but has not been sufficient to support other programs. Thus the Section must continue to ensure income from the Scientific Meetings Program. The Section has allocated up to \$14,100 in Section funds (mostly funds generated by Section meetings) to be used for student travel, student paper awards, undergraduate research grants and a contribution to *On To the Future* for the 2015-2016 fiscal year. Portions of the student travel funds will be matched by the GSA Foundation, so the amount given to students will be even greater.

The excellent financial state of the Section over the last decade has allowed the Section to dedicate most of its fiscal resources to support student programs and to increase the North-Central Section Endowment in the GSA Foundation. The Section operating account had a 2007-2008 fiscal-year-end balance of \$123,699. Subsequently the end-of-year balances have been less, mainly due to funds being transferred into the GSA Foundation. The operating account balance at the end of June 2013 was \$113,400. \$20,000 was transferred to the endowment during 2013-2014, leaving the operating account with a balance of \$107,898 and helping grow the endowment balance to \$237,643 by the end of June 2014. By the end of March, 2015, after a transfer of \$16,000, the Endowment balance was \$265,526.

Section Endowment History

The Section has substantially increased its endowment over the years. The Board made an initial pledge and payment of \$2,000 in 1996 to the North-Central Section Endowment Fund of the GSA Foundation (this Fund was referred to as the Second Century Fund in older North-Central reports to Council) with funds taken from the Section treasury (operating funds). The Management Board, at its annual meeting, has continued to approve a maximum continuing annual contribution to the Foundation. The funds from this Section endowment fund have been intended for student support. Because of the need to increase the financial stability of the Section, payments were not made over a number of years, and the amount of funds in the endowment remained very low. However, \$2,000 was contributed in September of 2005. Since then, because of the increase in financial stability of the Section following the financial success of recent meetings, annual transfers to the endowment have been \$7,000 to \$20,000.

The fund continued to grow but was greatly affected by the downturn in the stock market in early 2009 and by subsequent market fluctuations. At the end of the 2008-2009 fiscal years the endowment was at \$63,997. At the end of May, 2010, with a fiscal-year contribution of \$20,000, plus a \$5,000 match from the Foundation, the North-Central Endowment was at \$100,536, but at the end of June, 2010 (the end of the 2009-2010 fiscal year), the endowment was down to \$98,292. With further contributions, the ending balance of the North-Central Endowment as of the end of June, 2011, was \$138,312. Because of the excellent state of the Section's finances, in March of 2011 the Management Board approved a contribution of up to \$20,000 to the GSA Foundation in fiscal year 2011-2012 and \$7,000 was transferred to the endowment in September of 2011. That was matched by \$5,000 from the Foundation, and the endowment at the end of fiscal year 2011-2012 totaled \$154,603. A maximum contribution of \$20,000 for fiscal year 2012-2013 was also approved at the 2012 meeting of the Management Board, and \$10,000 was transferred after the Dayton meeting with the accompanying \$5000 match. At the end of June 2013, the North-Central Section Endowment stood at \$184,688. The Management Board approved a maximum contribution of \$20,000 again for fiscal year 2013-2014 pending outcome of the Kalamazoo meeting actuals, and the \$20,000 plus the \$5000 GSAF match helped raise the endowment to \$237,643 by the end of June 2014. By the end of March, 2015 (most recent numbers available), after a transfer of \$16,000 and the \$5000 match, the balance stood at \$265,526. Before the end of the fiscal year, an additional \$4000 was transferred to the Endowment.

Scientific Meetings Program:

2015: The 49th Annual Meeting was held May 18-19 at Monona Terrace, the beautiful Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Community and Convention Center on the shore of Lake Monona in Madison, Wisconsin. Total registration was 706, which generated \$77,065 in revenue. 397 papers and posters were presented in 45 sessions (25 oral and 20 poster sessions). The Welcoming Reception on Monday

evening featured the view from the Grand Terrace, and a Tuesday evening event offered an open house at Weeks Hall and a well-attended, appropriately cool and blustery Wisconsin Tailgate Dinner in the courtyard. Five field trips were run with 126 trippers and focused on Cambrian and Ordovician stratigraphy of SW Wisconsin; Baraboo; Cultural Geology of Beloit; Evolution of the lower Wisconsin River Valley; and Dimension Stone in the 21st Century. Revenue from the field trips amounted to \$7,604. Six corporate and organization sponsors contributed a total of \$4,275. Sixteen exhibitors paid a total of \$2625. After subtraction of the expenses for the meeting, net revenue for the meeting amounted to \$27,278.

2014: The 48th Annual Meeting was held April 24-25 at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel in Lincoln, Nebraska. Total registration was 401, which generated revenue of \$35,655. 245 papers and posters were presented in 29 sessions (21 oral and 8 poster sessions). The Welcoming Reception featured a quartet from the Nebraska Chamber players performing "Ashfall", composed by Rusty Banks, and a documentary "Ashfall Unearthed" by Nebraska Educational Television. Four field trips were run with 72 attendees— Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park, Pleistocene Geology and Classic Type Sections along the Missouri River Valley, Building and Ornamental Stones in the Nebraska State Capitol Building, and Quaternary Landforms and History of the Nebraska Sand Hills. Revenue from the field trips amounted to \$6,464. Two individual and corporate sponsors contributed a total of \$5500. Seven exhibitors paid a total of \$1300. Dr. Kirk Johnson, Sant Director, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, presented the very well-attended keynote speech: *Evolution, Time, Tectonics, Asteroids, Climate, and the Trajectory of Earth Science*. After subtraction of the expenses for the meeting, net revenue for the meeting amounted to \$15,885.

2013: The 47th Annual Meeting was held May 1-4 at the Fetzer Center on the campus of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Total registration was 476, which generated revenue of \$47,950. 299 papers and posters were presented in 35 sessions (23 oral and 12 poster sessions). Seven field trips were planned, including one guest trip, but three, (including the guest trip) were canceled. Revenue from the five field trips that ran with 75 participants (Kentland Quarry, Detroit Salt Mine, Michigan Sand Dunes, and Glacial Terrains) plus the NAGT luncheon amounted to \$9,360. Ten individual and corporate sponsors contributed a total of \$5950. Twelve exhibitors paid a total of \$2075. Dr. William Ruddiman, professor emeritus at the University of Virginia, gave a keynote address entitled, "When did we transform earth's surface?" After subtraction of the expenses for the meeting, net revenue for the meeting amounted to \$31,712.

Professional Development/Awards/Membership and Student Involvement:

The Section's primary Awards and Professional Development Programs are targeted to increase student involvement. Student attendance at Section meetings continues to be substantial, and has increased during the last few years. Student attendance at meetings since 2009 has ranged from 43% (Branson 2010) to 55% (Dayton 2012). At the 2015 meeting in Madison, 50% of attendees were students.

The Section's travel grants support student attendance. Up to \$6,000 from North-Central Section operating funds were allocated for each of the 2010-2011 through 2014-2015 fiscal years for student travel to the GSA Annual meetings and to the Section meetings. The funding also provides partial support to a student to represent the Section on the Student Advisory Council (SAC) and travel to the Annual Meeting. The travel grant funding from the section operating fund is partially matched by the GSA Foundation. The Section voted to increase the amount of operating funds to be disbursed for travel grants in 2015-2016 from \$6000 to \$8000.

The Section has increased maximum Student Paper/Poster Awards from \$400 in 1990 to \$2,000 at present.

The Section also approved covering some costs for a student to travel to Congressional Visits Day in September 2015.

During 2014-2015, a total of \$16,465 was awarded to students and \$14,150 was disbursed (the difference being travel grants that were not signed for and were therefore voided). 106 travel grants of \$70 each and one of \$140 (to the Student Advisory Council Rep) were awarded to students attending the GSA Annual meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, and 50 grants of \$100 or \$125 were awarded for travel to the Madison meeting. \$980 was awarded in undergraduate research grants, and 14 awards of varying amounts totaling \$2000 were awarded for poster awards at the Madison meeting.

The Roy J. Shlemon Mentor Program in Applied Geoscience and the John Mann Mentors in Applied Hydrogeology Program are provided through GSA headquarters at the section Annual meetings, and in 2015 Career workshops and a meeting for *On To the Future* participants/potential participants were held onsite.

GSA Campus Representatives from the Section are invited to meet with the Meeting Planning and Technical Program Advisory Board and Local Committees during the section Annual Meetings in order to be recognized for their service, and to provide input into future meeting planning, the technical program, and student involvement.

Research Grants Program:

The Section initiated a competitive Research Grants Program for undergraduate student members in 1993. Grant application forms and procedures were developed and have been refined over time. The maximum amount of an individual grant is limited to \$300. Eleven grants were awarded in the 2010-2011 fiscal year, for a total of \$2,100. In the 2011-2012 fiscal year, four grants were awarded for a total of \$1,150; in 2012-2013, three grants were awarded totaling \$900. In 2013-2014, four grants were awarded totaling \$940. Though marketing was increased to build awareness of the grants, in 2014-2015 four grants totaling \$980 were awarded. At the 2015 Section meeting, the Management Board approved increasing the maximum for each award to \$500, while keeping the total available for grants at \$2100.

GeoScience Education:

The Section initiated special Geoscience Education sessions at its 1990 meeting. These have now become a standard part of meeting planning. Some costs are generally underwritten by the Section, with reduced or nominal registration for all K-12 teachers. A member of the GSA Education Committee is included as an ex-officio member of the Management Board. This year's meeting in Madison included several oral and poster sessions and one workshop related to K-16 geoscience education.

Applied and Environmental Geoscience Programs:

The Section continues to pursue greater involvement from professionals in the private sector in environmental geology, engineering geology/geotechnical engineering, and hydrogeological consulting. The Section initiated this with a highly successful effort at the 1991 meeting. Special

sessions for, and by, consultants have been encouraged for all meetings. The 2011 Pittsburgh meeting included a number of sessions of relevance to applied geology. These included the sessions: Innovative data management and visualization in applied geology and other applied topics; Engineering geology/slope stability/mine subsidence; Marcellus – exploration and production; Marcellus—production and disposal of produced water; and Applied geology: environmental, engineering and hydrogeologic applications. The 2012 Dayton meeting included the following sessions of relevance to applied geology: Applications of remote sensing to the geological and environmental sciences; Applications, quantification, and modeling of groundwater—surface-water Interactions; CO₂ Sequestration; Geothermal Resources of the Central United States—An Important Source of Renewable Energy; Mercury Biogeochemistry; and Watersheds, Hydrogeology, and Environmental Site Investigations in the Midwest Basin and Arches Region. In 2012 there was also a hot topics at noon session on shale gas and fracking. With such involvement private firms have sometimes provided donations to support meetings and some consulting/applied geology firms and/or agencies have been repeat exhibitors and/or sponsors. At the 2013 meeting in Kalamazoo, the trend continued, with session topics such as Remote Sensing Applications in Environmental Geology, CO₂ Storage and Greenhouse Gases, Hydrogeologic Investigations for Improved assessment of Water Availability and Use in the Glaciated United states, and a general session encompassing other Applied Geology topics. There were also several applied geology exhibitors including two oil/gas companies. In 2014, oral and poster sessions focused on applied geology topics. In 2015 there were sessions on Frac Sand in the Midwest and the impacts of urbanization on water resources, as well as more general applied geology sessions.

Publications Program:

The Section's field-trip guidebooks serve as important legacies of the Section meetings. The geological guidebook for the 2005 Minneapolis meeting was published and is available from the Minnesota Geological Survey. Three guidebooks prepared for the 2006 Akron meeting are available from the Ohio Geological Survey; two of these were published in 2006 and the third, on the geologic setting and processes along Lake Erie, was published in 2010. One of the guidebooks for the 2007 Lawrence meeting has been published as Kansas Geological Survey Open-File Report 2008-2. The field-trip guidebook for the 2008 meeting, *From the Cincinnati Arch to the Illinois Basin: Geological Field Excursions along the Ohio River Valley*, was published as Geological Society of America Field Guide 12 and the field-trip guidebook for the 2010 meeting, *From Precambrian Rift Volcanoes to the Mississippian Shelf Margin: Geological Field Excursions in the Ozark Mountains*, was published as Geological Society of America Field Guide 17. The guidebook for the 2011 meeting was published as *From the Shield to the Sea: Geological Field Trips from the 2011 Joint Meeting of the GSA Northeastern and North-Central Sections* (Geological Society of America Field Guide 20) and the guidebook for the 2012 meeting was published as *On and around the Cincinnati Arch and Niagara Escarpment: Geological Field Trips in Ohio and Kentucky for the GSA North-Central Section Meeting* (Geological Society of America Field Guide 27). The guidebook for the 2013 meeting was published as *Insights into the Michigan Basin: Salt Deposits, Impact Structure, Youngest Basin Bedrock, Glacial Geomorphology, Dune Complexes, and Coastal Bluff Stability* (Geological Society of America Field Guide 31). And most recently, the guidebook for the 2014 meeting was published as *Geologic Field Trips along the Boundary between the Central Lowlands and Great Plains* (Geological Society of America Field Guide 36). The 2015 Field trip organizers have been offered the opportunity to publish guides (after the fact) through the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey (WGNHS).

Cooperation with Other Professional Societies:

The Section continues to foster cooperation with other societies by providing opportunities for joint meetings and sponsorship opportunities. Societies sponsoring sessions, and/or having programs, breakfasts, or luncheons at the Section meetings the past few years included: the Pander Society, the North-Central Section of the Paleontological Society, the Great Lakes Section of the Society for Sedimentary Geology, the Central Section of NAGT, the Council on Undergraduate Research, the Northern Ohio Geological Society, the Geological Curators Group; the GSA Archaeological Geology Division, The Heritage Stone Task Group of the IUGS, the International Association of Geochemistry, Great Lakes Geologic Mapping Coalition, and the Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists. The Paleontological Society Council also held its mid-year meeting in conjunction with the 2012 and 2013 section meetings.

Long-Range Planning and Coordination:

As a result of its long-range planning the Section has continued to review and implement better marketing strategies for its meetings and activities, has tried to increase attendance at its meetings, has stabilized financially, and has continued to support several student programs. The confirmed meeting schedule is:

2016: Champaign, Illinois

2017: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (joint with the Northeastern Section)

2018: Ames, Iowa (to be formally proposed this fall)

As preparation for these meetings, organizers for the 2015 Madison and 2016 Champaign meetings attended a training session at GSA headquarters in May, 2014. The Section's policy in recent years has been to use Section operating funds when necessary to send people to this session in addition to the one person per section paid for by GSA Headquarters. The North-Central Section Planning and Technical Program Advisory Board met at the 2015 meeting in Madison to discuss aspects of the technical program and potential locations for future meetings.

Section representatives promoted the then-upcoming Madison meeting at the Section exhibit area at the GSA Annual Meeting in Vancouver, B.C. in 2014, and there were promotional materials and planning opportunities for the Champaign meeting at the meeting in Madison.

North-Central Section Website:

The Section website is continuing to be built as part of the main Geological Society of America site. Besides basic information on the section, the site includes Reports to GSA Council and the Minutes of the North-Central Section Management Board Meeting for those wishing more information on the history of the section and its finances.

Respectfully submitted,

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