



NAGT-USGS Cooperative Summer Field Training Program



Now beginning its fifth decade, the National Association of Geoscience Teachers (NAGT)-U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Cooperative Summer Field Training Program is the longest continuously running internship program in the earth sciences. Over the past forty years, more than 1600 students have participated in this program with an impressive number of these individuals becoming full-time employees of the USGS.

The cooperative program was launched at the Geological Society of America meeting in Kansas City in early fall of 1965 when William “Bill” Pecora, the newly appointed Director of the USGS, held a meeting with a small group of distinguished professors and officers of the NAGT. Pecora felt strongly that the USGS needed to be more engaged in geological education. He had a plan for how this might be accomplished and wanted to get the professors’ reactions to an initiative that would provide better linkage to academia while, in the process, providing better summer field assistants for the USGS. Pecora suggested that the USGS would provide support by way of internships for outstanding undergraduate geosciences majors, while NAGT would advertise the program to faculty and students, solicit nominations, distribute applications, and assist in processing all materials. Needless to say, ‘Pecora’s Plan,’ as it became known, met with instant approval.

Although some modifications have been made over the years, the NAGT-USGS Cooperative Summer Field Training Program operates today much as it did from the beginning. With active participation from the highest levels of both organizations (including the Director of the USGS), a joint committee oversees the program. The program “year” begins in September with all field camp directors being provided information about the program and the opportunity to nominate up to three students, based on total camp enrollment. Nominated students apply by sending a resume, letter of interest, and transcripts to the USGS Education Office. At the same time, USGS scientists interested in working with an intern send information about field, laboratory, or office-related scientific projects to the Education Office. Candidates are then matched by skill and interest with up to five projects. The listing of candidates and accompanying academic information are sent to USGS scientists for review, interviews, selection, or possible further discussion. USGS personnel make final selections. As interdisciplinary system science is a cornerstone of our science, all disciplines are encouraged, and do take advantage of, this program’s support and available talent. Students hired through this program have continually received outstanding reviews from our managers; and, over the decades, an impressive number of these individuals have become full-time colleagues. Interns employed through this program are hired at a rate commensurate to their educational level and experience, typically at a GS-5 Grade, Step 1, with an adjusted locality payment.

Over the years, NAGT has succeeded in identifying top-flight students for the program, and the USGS has succeeded in garnering the interest of competent and enthusiastic supervising mentors. Evaluations of the program by the students and managers have been strongly positive. The NAGT-USGS Cooperative Summer Field Training Program continues Pecora’s vision of greater educational involvement and provides a first rate professional experience to students early in their careers.

For more information about this program, contact: Robert Ridky, MS 110, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA 20192-0002, email: rridky@usgs.gov.

NAGT/USGS 2009 Cooperative Summer Field Training Program Internship Placements

Andrew Ashlock, University of Arkansas – Field Characterization and Instrumentation of a Potential Debris Flow Initiation Site, Central Coast Range, Western Oregon (Mentor: Rex Baum; Denver, CO).

David Azzolini, University of Michigan – Chemistry of Uncontaminated Alluvial Sediment in the Cheyenne River, South Dakota (Mentor: John Stamm; Rapid City, SD).

Anna Baker, University of Wisconsin/Eau Claire – Natural and Enhanced Biodegradation of Chlorinated Solvents in Ground Water (Mentor: Allen Shaprio; Reston, VA).

Catherine Beck, Tufts University – Quantifying Landscape Change Impacts on Habitat Characteristics (Mentor: Geneva Chong; Jackson, WY).

Chelsea Brunner, Western Kentucky University – Technical Assistance and Training Program Development Following the Wenchuan, China, M=7.9 Earthquake (Mentor: Shane Detweiler; Menlo Park, CA).

Amanda Cains, University of Arkansas – Cape Cod Toxic Substances Hydrology Field Research Project (Mentor: Denis LeBlanc; Northborough, MA).

Rebecca Collins, West Virginia University – Reservoir Erosion and Channel Deposition Following Removal of Oregon's Marmot Dam (Mentor: Jon Major, Vancouver, WA).

Michael Cronin, The Pennsylvania State University – Evaluating the Preferential Component of Aquifer Recharge at a Site Dominated by Sand Deposits and a Shallow Water Table (Mentor: John Nimmo; Menlo Park, CA).

Jane Didaleusky, Smith College – Changes in the North American Ferroalloys Industry since the Institution of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (Mentor: John Jorgenson; Reston, VA).

Corey Dimond, Central Washington University – Building Understanding of Great Earthquake Potential Through Construction of a Global Seismic Profile Database (Mentor: Joan Gomberg; Seattle, WA).

Ben Ferreira, University of Iowa – Geodetic Monitoring of Cascade Range Volcanoes and Yellowstone (Mentor: Michael Lisowski; Vancouver, WA).

Teresa Fish, Western Washington University – Rock Creek Fish Population and Life History Assessment (Mentor: Brady Allen; Cook, WA).

Jordan Garrett, University of Texas/Arlington – Hydrologic Studies and Data Collection in Arkansas (Mentor: Dave Freiwald; Little Rock, AR).

Paul Guse, Illinois State University – Surface-water and Ground-water Networks (Mentor: Gerard Butch; Troy, NY).

Leif Hammes, Western Washington University – Geologic Map and Research, Blue Ridge Parkway, VA (Mentor: Scott Southworth; Reston, VA).

Ajeet Johnson, Oregon State University – Afghan Geological Survey Training Program Development (Mentor: Walter Mooney; Menlo Park, CA).

Justin Knudson, Montana State University – Geochemical Processes and Pesticides in Limestone Aquifers (Mentor: Kevin Breen; New Cumberland, PA).

Rachael Kroodsmas, University of Michigan – Field Measurement and Analysis of the Exchanges of Greenhouse Gases, Water Vapor, and Energy in Urban and Sub-alpine Forest Ecosystems (Mentor: Dean Anderson; Denver, CO).

Zachary Lauffenburger, Colorado State University – Noninvasive Grizzly Bear Population Monitoring in Northwestern Montana (Mentor: Katherine Kendall; West Glacier, MT).

Joel Loeffler, Missouri State University – Mercury Topical Study of the USGS National Water Quality Assessment Program (Mentor: Celeste Journey; Columbia, SC).

William Magee, The Ohio State University – A Cascade of Microbial and Biogeochemical Effects Caused by Melting Glaciers and Rock Glaciers (Mentor: Jill Baron; Fort Collins, CO).

Danielle Moss, Miami University – Evaluating the Preferential Component of Aquifer Recharge at a Site Dominated by Sand Deposits and a Shallow Water Table (Mentor: John Nimmo; Menlo Park, CA).

Peter Neff, University of Washington – Cascade Volcano Digital Atlas Project (Mentor: Steve Schilling; Vancouver, WA).

Patrick Niemeyer, University of Mississippi – National Oil and Gas Assessment Project, Devonian Gas Shale (Mentor: Jim Coleman; Reston, VA).

John Niles, San Francisco State University – Seismic Monitoring (Mentor: David Croker; Menlo Park, CA).

Stephen Peterson, Temple University – Reconstruction of a Miocene Landscape Through the Analysis of Ancient Soils (Mentor: Jean Self-Trail; Reston, VA).

James Rea, Wesleyan University – Petrologic Monitoring of Active Volcanoes (Mentor: Carl Thornber; Vancouver, WA).

Roxanne Renedo, Smith College – Afghan Geological Survey Training Program Development (Mentor: Walter Mooney; Menlo Park, CA).

Jason Ricketts, San Diego State University – The Salton Seismic-Imaging Project Preparations for a Major Active-Source Seismic Survey (Mentor: Gary Fuis; Menlo Park, CA).

Rebecca Saunders, Augustana College – Quantifying Landscape Change Impacts on Habitat Characteristics (Mentor: Geneva Chong; Jackson, WY).

Lauren Shumaker, University of California/Santa Cruz – Hydrogeologic Mapping in the Great Basin and the California Coast Ranges (Mentor: Don Sweetkind; Denver, CO).

David Smith, University of Iowa – Geochemical Processes Relating to Aquatic Health (Mentor: Kevin Breen; New Cumberland, PA).

Ryan Thress, University of California/Santa Barbara – Geologic Map and Research, Blue Ridge Parkway, VA (Mentor: Scott Southworth; Reston, VA).

Emily Voytek, Tufts University – Applied Hydrogeophysics Research (Mentor: John Lane; Storrs, CT).

Derrick Wagner, University of Wisconsin/Oshkosh – Cape Cod Toxic Substances Hydrology Field Research Project (Mentor: Denis LeBlanc; Northborough, MA).

Jakob Wartman, Macalester College – Tsunami Source Working Group: Notable Earthquakes in the Pre-Digital Era Archiving, Record Scanning, and Digital Analysis (Mentor: Stephen Kirby).