

**Meeting Minutes, AAPG Public Outreach Committee Meeting
Friday, October 27, 2006**

**Meeting convened at 1:30 PM, WesternGeco Executive Conference Room
10001 Richmond Ave., Houston**

Present in Houston:

Gretchen Gillis, Committee Chair
Tim Diggs
Tom Dignes
Karen Glaser

Present via conference call:

Lee Billingsley, AAPG President	David Hawk
Elmo Brown	Larry Nation
Will Green, AAPG President-Elect	Eric Radjef

Safety – K. Glaser

Safety procedures for the building outlined, and locations of fire exits detailed.

Opening Remarks – G. Gillis

The main point of this meeting is to outline actions for ourselves and for AAPG to develop a long-term and effective public outreach presence. We need to work as a group to recruit more members for the committee from all sections and regions within AAPG. The Gulf Coast and Southwest sections are well-represented, but we need additional membership, preferably including more international members.

Words from AAPG President – L. Billingsley

Stated objectives and the proposed website are good measures of AAPG's public outreach program. The plan for the website is OK; we just need to get funding for setting up operations.

News from Executive Committee: The first issue is the proposed Climate Card, which has been sent back to the authors via the publication committee with comments. The authors were asked if they were willing to make changes and they responded in the affirmative. They are in the process of making edits in response to the comments received.

We are also setting up a new committee to provide guidance to a Congressional Committee on Global Climate Change and are considering what the committee makeup should be. The intent is to have a broad range of opinions represented within the committee. It is also to be designed to provide scientific guidance, independent science-based opinions, and apolitical direction on the economics of, for example, mitigation of the effects of global warming and sea level rise.

GEO-DC: We are not in the business of lobbying, but do have a presence in DC and knowledge of ongoing and pending legislation. The intent is to have better communications with members with respect to, e.g., comment periods with MMS and Lands, and other legislative items of potential interest to industry and to our members.

We're also in the process of planning "content trailers," similar to movie previews, an idea of Lee's wife. These will be designed to introduce ideas and concepts using music, song, and embedded images. Currently want to produce three: the first is about "Geology" in general and will be aimed at school-age children; the second, "Petroleum Geology Careers" will target college-age students; the third will be aimed at young professionals. All of these will be linked to the newly designed website.

Words from AAPG Communications Director – L. Nation

Currently very actively involved with the media.

1. Provided a supplement on careers to *Oil and Gas Investor* (including the annual salary survey).
2. Assisted an Anchorage newspaper in contacting Harrison Schmidt to do a story on both lunar and petroleum geology.
3. Assisted a newspaper in Alabama on a story related to gas shale projects in that state.
4. Spoke with *Bloomberg* about Salt Lake City's growth as a new "oil town."
5. Worked with Russell Gold at the *NY Times* on an article about deep drilling in the Gulf of Mexico.
6. In contact with Paul Weimer at Colorado University.
7. In contact with several journalists, including one from *O&G Journal*, who will be attending the meeting in Perth.

Larry also noted that the November *Explorer* was in the mail earlier than usual courtesy of a new system of production.

Public Outreach updates – All attendees

1. DPA, Government Affairs Committee and PTTC – G. Gillis reporting for Bennett Bearden

Review of AAPG Position Papers is ongoing. AAPG members successfully staffed an information booth at the National Conference of State Legislators. PTTC funding from the DOE is expected to end this year, so other funding sources are being sought.

2. Committee Oversight Committee – Gretchen

The COC will request that each AAPG committee report its outreach activities so we can better coordinate efforts.

3. COPUS – E. Radjef

COPUS is an acronym for "Coalition On the Public Understanding of Science", a new group whose first meeting took place in January 2006. The group is designed to link different entities into one consortium to promote the knowledge of science and how science is applied to various problems. From COPUS's website at: <http://www.copusproject.org> : "COPUS is a grassroots effort linking universities, scientific societies, science advocacy groups, science media, science educators, businesses, and industry in a consortium having as its goal a greater public understanding of the nature of science and its value to society. This is an essential step in re-establishing the nation's leadership role in the national and global scientific enterprise. It is critical to ensuring the long-term social well-being of the American people." COPUS members hope to accomplish these goals apolitically, and with no agenda.

Two questions raised: 1. Will there be a formal invitation from COPUS for AAPG to join? Answer: possibly. 2. What are (or will be) the criteria for association/membership/ participation with COPUS ? Answer: No idea at present. Will probably have to go through the Ex Com.

4. National Park Service – E. Brown

E-mail has been sent but no replies have been received to date.

5. AGI – Bennett Bearden and G. Gillis

At present, AAPG's activities with AGI have been curtailed due to Marcus Milling's recent passing.

6. SPE – Rick Fritz

Are there any committee members who would be willing to work with SPE as liaison? Existing AAPG/SPE members might be best but any volunteers would be appreciated.

7. Publication projects, including website – G. Gillis

Some work has begun on the “Primer of petroleum geology” but it’s currently a low-priority item.

Thanks to L. Nation for securing the new URL – www.petroleumgeology.org – for Public Outreach. To move forward with this very important item volunteers will be needed from the committee to help build it (see below). We also need to identify some crucial links for the initial version of the site (which will be reviewed by a subset of members before going “live”). The content of the site is crucial (we cannot just add links in a haphazard fashion; organizational issues). Also, how will we make all of this happen, and who is the audience? E. Radjef suggests, for example, contacting teachers to ask about content. What is the best way to get geoscientists to link to the site?

Action item: E. Brown (already involved in a similar effort outside AAPG) volunteered to work with R. Paez to get the process started.

It was also suggested that Presidents and Presidents-Elect, or others, from each of the regions participate in building and modifying the site through time, serving on the committee for three years, with a new member from each section coming in once per year as others leave. So far requests for region participation have met with little or no response. The question was then raised that, if not the section President, then at least a delegate? Answer: preferably not. The purpose would be to have effective dissemination of information from the Outreach Committee (and site) directly to members in various sections.

Action item: G. Gillis to work with D. Hawk to draft a letter about this issue.

Another point was that the committee can ask, but is each section or region willing to provide its President (or delegate) to the committee? The solution might be that if L. Billingsley invokes his power as President of AAPG to include such participation as part of the responsibilities of section presidencies, then such participation would be assured. L. Billingsley also suggested having at least *ex-officio* members included from the sections. D. Hawk raised the concern that if only executive-level members were included, would there be sufficient “informational penetration” to the membership at large? Further discussion about the details of the composition of the members responsible for building and maintaining the website will be needed.

8. Podcasts – L. Nation

iPods, MP3s, etc., etc., are now ubiquitous and constitute another vehicle for disseminating information. What’s needed at present is viable content – either audio or audiovisual (latter preferred). The main target audience for initial podcasts is those ≤ 25 years of age. Possible content includes technical talks over the web, distinguished lectures, etc. Podcasts may serve as a public outreach tool as well as a membership tool for people who cannot attend meetings. File size and bandwidth, especially for the audiovisual material needed for geology, are concerns at present (and as pointed out by K. Glaser, this is especially true in overseas areas where we might want to contact members or potential members). Once AAPG HQ better understands the technology, we’ll probably need to work directly with universities and the sections to develop.

9. Climate Cards – T. Diggs

Initially tasked with trying to distill comments and concerns from more than 150 e-mails and nearly 100 posts on the “member comment” section of AAPG’s web page regarding issuance of the climate cards. This effort is now largely moot as the content of the card has been formally reviewed and sent back to the authors via the publication committee. The authors of the card are now in the process of making edits in response to the comments received.

Briefly, however, partial analysis of e-mail correspondence and content of posts revealed some surprising results. As part of an effort to gather and tabulate the most important issues raised by member correspondents regarding the proposed Climate Change Cards, about 60 messages dating from late May 2006 to early July 2006 were critically evaluated. Every effort was made to objectively evaluate the content of these messages and accurately record them. In many cases, while acknowledging certain issues, different members took

diametrically opposed stances (as detailed below). Somewhat surprisingly, only 24 respondents accounted for much of the recorded traffic in this period, but the concerns raised were repeated frequently in this subset of posts. (I included none of my own posts or thoughts on the threads – purely a tabulation of others’ posts, ideas, and thoughts.) The following list is in descending order of importance, and includes only the top three issues.

1. Disagreement exists within AAPG's membership about global climate change. There is a need for constructive dialog. All members' views must be considered as the Card will reflect on the membership as a whole. Alternative views concurred that there is disagreement but argued that not everyone needs to agree with the contents of the Card (just as not everyone agrees with the contents of Bulletin articles). (16 of 24 respondents)

2. (Tie) Global climate change is a complicated issue and is not well-understood. The card is too narrowly focused to rigorously and properly address the issue. In its current form it ignores calls for resource conservation at the individual level. Alternative views concurred that climate change is complicated, but stressed the need for more geological input into understanding climate shifts, and definitively stating that there is no credible evidence for anthropogenic influence. (8 of 24 respondents)

2. (Tie) The issue has become highly politically, and for some, emotionally, charged. Science on both sides of the issue is being ignored by opposing factions. Some environmentalists and politicians are feared to advocate cessation of fossil fuel use, with concurrent catastrophic effects on our industry (see also one of the ties for (6) below). (8 of 24 respondents)

Other suggestions about the climate cards include: 1. having them available online for members to download and print if desired; 2. changing the card purely to a “fact sheet” with no interpretations; 3. actually expanding the “fact sheet” concept to include other issues about which AAPG currently has position papers (i.e., replacing position papers with fact sheets).

Other Business, Plans and Action Items – All

1. Web issues in general: how will the website be created and implemented?

Action item: E. Brown (already involved in a similar effort outside AAPG) volunteered to work with R. Paez to get the process started.

2. Will we need a consultant for web design?

Action item: G. Gillis (and others?) will formulate a proposal and budget and get this to L. Billingsley for review and suggestions for funding sources.

3. Other committee plans: do we need to develop a more effective plan for attracting domestic and international members? Do we need to staff AAPG booths at meetings (AAPG and others such as SEG, EAGE, etc.) with professional members as well as regular staff? We have had booths recently at AGU (for the first time) and plan to have them at GSA as well. These may represent excellent opportunities to attract new student members.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM.

Submitted Tuesday, October 31, 2006

Tim Diggs