

## **PRESERVATION OF CORES AND SAMPLES COMMITTEE**

### **Annual Report for FY 99**

#### **SUMMARY OF RECENT ACTIVITY**

The committee continued to encourage broad support for existing and proposed state, regional and national core and sample storage facilities, including the USGS facility in Denver and AGI's proposed Stapleton project. To further support AGI's efforts in geoscience preservation, the committee cooperated with them to conduct an inventory of existing facilities, sent a representative to their National Geoscience Data Repository Steering Committee meetings and prepared a resolution in support of AGI's activities for the AAPG Executive Committee to consider. This resolution was accepted and distributed to pertinent parties by the Executive Committee.

The committee concluded that to fully promote the preservation of cores, samples and perhaps other geoscience material, it will be necessary to further increase member awareness of the problem, and perhaps to expand our committee mission statement. As an initial step in this process, a subcommittee worked with AGI to conduct a survey of space remaining in existing facilities available to preserve additional cores and samples. Information gained from this inventory will be combined with data gathered on the value of cores and samples for research projects to produce an article on the value of cores and samples, and the necessity of preserving them, for the *AAPG Explorer*. Scott Montgomery attended our San Antonio committee meeting and volunteered to author this article using information gathered by the committee.

To further promote the preservation of cores and samples, a subcommittee was appointed to consider a committee website, and promotional booths at AAPG Section meetings were discussed. One such booth will be set up at the Eastern Section meeting in Indianapolis this fall.

The committee polled our sister societies to determine if they have a committee comparable with ours with whom we can cooperate and coordinate efforts. Finally, the future of this revitalized committee was placed in the hands of a very capable Chairperson, who will be assisted by a concerned, newly-appointed Vice-Chairperson.

#### **SUPPORT FOR AGI's PRESERVATION EFFORTS**

A three-person subcommittee, including Marvin Carlson, Steve Sonnenberg and Steven Goolsby, prepared a resolution in support of AGI's Geoscience Data Repository System effort which was submitted to the Executive Committee for their consideration. The Executive Committee approved the resolution and circulated it to a list of pertinent geoscience organizations using a distribution list provided by the committee.

A second three-person subcommittee, including Edie Allison, Carol Martiniuk and Julie LeFever, was appointed to coordinate our efforts with those of AGI in preparing and distributing a questionnaire that was focused on documenting available space in existing State-supported facilities. Such documentation was considered to be essential before one could argue that we need to create or expand regional or national facilities. AGI distributed their questionnaire in the fall and reported back to the committee in San Antonio. Twenty three responses were received, and of the 325,000 square feet in these repositories, 89% of the capacity is filled. We can conclude from these results that the problem indeed is critical.

#### **UPDATE ON AGI ACTIVITIES**

AGI's proposed Stapleton project apparently has fallen through, a victim of low oil prices and high environmental liabilities. During and following an AGI National Geoscience Data Repository System Steering Committee meeting in Texas, industry expressed little desire to donate the proposed \$4/box fee necessary to operate this facility. Instead, companies apparently have found ways to reduce their storage

costs to a more acceptable level. As a result, AGI shifted their attention to an existing private core warehouse on a ranch near Schulenburg, Texas. Core is shipped in and out of this facility on a daily basis to and from users who borrow or rent core. Operators of the repository may be ready to release 80-90 percent of their space for public use. The Texas BEG is developing a catalog of existing holdings.

AGI also had initiated discussions with Amoco regarding their 20-acre facility near Houston. The merger with BP created a few problems that have yet to be overcome. AGI also has been discussing the need for a central facility with the National Science Foundation. NSF expressed some interest, but strong vocal support from university geology departments will be necessary to continue this discussion.

AGI will host a two-day workshop this fall on data management and preservation. A product of the workshop could be a letter to the Presidents of the major oil companies emphasizing the importance of data and the need to preserve them.

### **UPDATE ON THE USGS FACILITY**

A priority of this committee has been to obtain a commitment from the USGS to assure adequate financial support of their Denver repository, both near and long-term. Subsequently, Thomas Michalski, in an e-mail message to the committee chairman prior to the San Antonio meeting, summarized the value of their facility to regional users, and outlined a new educational partnership among the USGS, the Colorado School of Mines and the Petroleum Technology Transfer Council's Regional Resource Center in Golden. Based on the demise of the AGI project at Stapleton, continued use by industry and the new partnership, the USGS management has indicated that the future of the Core Research Center is "not an issue" and the center should continue to be operated in the foreseeable future.

### **LITERATURE SURVEY OF CORE/SAMPLE USE**

To document the value of cores and samples for geologic and engineering research, the committee committed time and personnel to a survey of the literature. A four-person subcommittee designed a standard form for this exercise, on which the level of reliance of the researchers on cores and samples, the focus and impact of the research, and the source and final disposition of the cores and samples will be recorded. AAPG bulletins for three-year periods in the 80s and 90s will be surveyed, as well as selected Society of Petroleum Engineers meeting proceedings. Initial results indicate a high dependency of Bulletin authors on cores and samples.

The results of this literature survey will be used by Scott Montgomery to write an article for the *Explorer* that documents the value of cores and samples for our industry, and the importance of preserving them for future research. In addition to the *Explorer* article, other articles will be written for the Oil and Gas Journal and perhaps World Oil.

### **OTHER COMMITTEE EFFORTS**

Carol Martiniuk volunteered to chair a subcommittee effort to address the issue of making lists of available core accessible via the Internet. The goal would be a searchable data listing by specific geographic location within each state. This effort will be pursued. One of the key questions on the recent questionnaire was whether or not operators of repositories maintain a digital database in which well locations are documented.

The committee discussed the advisability of developing exhibit booths at AAPG Section meetings to promote the value of cores and the need to promote their preservation within companies and in government facilities. The chair offered to provide space in his PTTC booth at the Eastern Section meeting in Indianapolis in September.

The current chair is stepping down after a four-year run during which he observed a renewed interest among committee members, increased cooperation with AGI, a commitment from the USGS to continue financial support for their regionally important repository, an endorsement by the AAPG Executive Committee in support of geoscience preservation efforts, suggestions for articles and exhibits to promote this important issue, and perhaps the need to expand the mission statement of the committee to encompass the preservation of other geoscience material, thus increasing the support base for this effort. The future of the committee is secure, under the capable leadership of Edie Allison and her yet to be named Vice Chairman.

Respectfully submitted,  
Douglas G. Patchen, Chairman

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