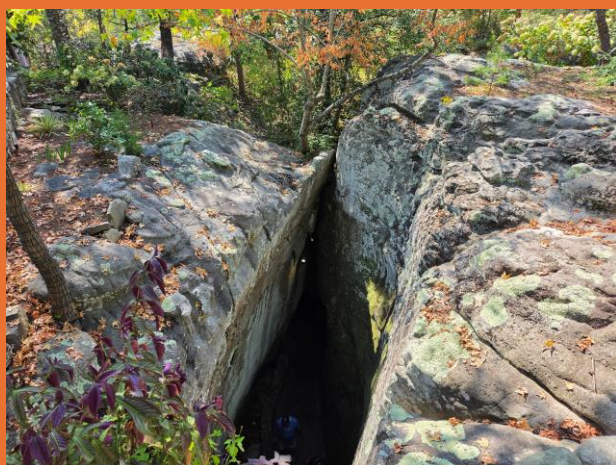
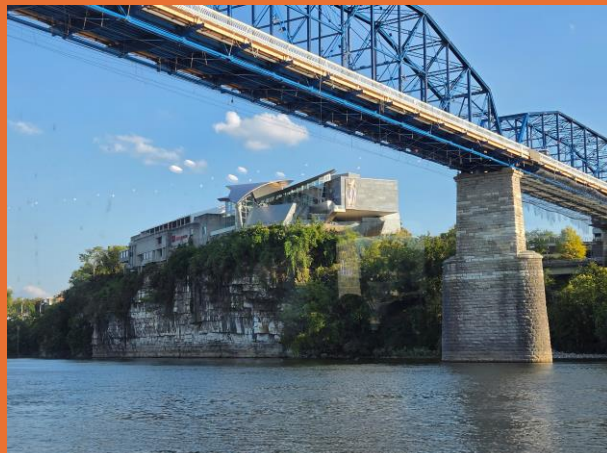


GEONews

Newsletter of the Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists,
Carolinas Chapter

2009, 2011, 2013, 2016, 2017, and 2020 AEG Chapter of the Year

FALL 2026



IN THIS ISSUE

Carolinas Chapter Greensboro Dinner Meeting Announcement.....	6
2027 Membership Renewal Reminder.....	9
GWPNC Memorial Scholarship.....	10
AEG National Annual Meeting Recap.....	15
AEG National Meeting Field Course Recap....	23
Asheville Dinner Meeting Recap.....	33
Greenville, SC Dinner Meeting Recap.....	38

SAVE THE DATES

Carolinas Chapter Dinner Meeting, Kau at Revolution Mill, Greensboro, NC,	October 29, 2026
CGS Annual Meeting and Field Trip, Myrtle Beach, SC,	October 30 to November 1, 2026
NC Assoc. of Env. Professionals Regulatory Real Talk, Raleigh, NC,	November 5, 2026
GWPNC Fall Mini Conference, Lenny Boy Brewing Co. Charlotte, NC,	November 12, 2026

GEONews Fall 2026**Issue Date: October 21, 2026****TABLE OF CONTENTS****Articles and Reports**

Message from the Chair <i>by Laura Elliott</i>	3
GWPNC Memorial Scholarship in Memory of Mike Stanforth <i>by Drew Baird</i>	10
AEG National Annual Meeting Recap <i>by Katie Adkisson</i>	15
AEG National Annual Meeting Field Course Recap <i>by Katie Adkisson</i>	23
Carolinas Chapter Asheville Dinner Meeting Recap <i>by Jen Thomas</i>	33
Carolinas Chapter Greenville, SC Dinner Meeting Recap <i>by Carsen Adams and Rick Kolb</i>	37
Carbon Ore, Rare Earth, and Critical Minerals (CORE-CM) <i>by Tristan Childress</i>	43

Board Business

2025 Chapter Finances <i>by Walt Plekan</i>	4
2027 Membership Renewal Reminder.....	9
Carolinas Chapter Volunteer Opportunities.....	45
AEG Carolinas Chapter Board of Directors Meeting Minutes: August 18, 2026.....	46

Forms and Flyers

Carolinas Chapter Greensboro Dinner Meeting Announcement	6
Dennis J. Anderson Memorial.....	22
Olivia Pelligrino Memorial.....	36
Calendar of Events	49
Sponsor Application	51

Thanks to our Sponsors!

GeoNews is a publication of the Carolinas Chapter of AEG. There are four issues per year, with deadlines and issue publication dates listed below. We publish news of the profession, announcements, student member news, technical articles, and job openings.

Deadlines for submittal to AEG Carolinas GeoNews

(can be flexible depending on events)

Spring—deadline March 1, issue date April 21

Summer—deadline June 1, issue date July 21

Fall—deadline October 1, issue date October 21

Winter—deadline January 1, issue date January 21

Deadlines for submittal for the National AEG News:

March issue—January 15

June issue—April 15

September issue—July 15

December issue—October 15

AEG Carolinas Chapter Current Officers and Contacts

Chair	Laura Elliott, P.G. laura.elliott@terracon.com
Vice Chair	Meredith Ambrose, P.G. mparnold11@gmail.com
Treasurer	Walt Plekan, P.G. Walt.plekan@stantec.com
Secretary	Carsen Adams, P.G. carsenadams95@gmail.com
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Membership Chair	Katie Adkisson, P.G. kaitlinadkisson@gmail.com
Student Liaison	Michael Daniels, P.G. mdaniels@falconengineers.com
Social Media/Social Committee Chair	Adam Phillips abp9676@hotmail.com
Field Course Chair	Andrew Beaty andrewbeaty3@gmail.com
Chapter Sponsor Chair	Colleen Ranieri, P.G. colleen.ranieri@NV5.com
GeoNews Co-Editors	Meredith Ambrose, P.G. mparnold11@gmail.com Katie Adkisson, P.G. kaitlinadkisson@gmail.com
Advisor	Paul Weaver, P.G. pmweaver187@gmail.com
Advisor	Rick Kolb, P.G. Rick.kolb1@gmail.com
Regional Director	Hawkins Gagnon, P.G. jhawkinsgagnon@gmail.com
AEG Carolinas Chapter Website	www.aegcarolinas.org
AEG National Website	www.aegweb.org

Cover: Collage of pictures from the AEG National Annual Meeting in Chattanooga, TN (*taken by Katie Adkisson*).

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Message from the Chair

By Laura Elliott, P.G.

The Annual Meeting in Chattanooga was a terrific success and enjoyed by all. There is some great coverage in our newsletter. It was great to see so many of you at the first ever North Carolina Environmental Conference earlier this month in Winston-Salem and the Social Event in Wilmington. We had a wonderful turnout for our Asheville Chapter meeting at Hi-Wire Brewing; thank you to Susan Avritt for a wonderful talk! We had a great turnout at our newest meeting spot in Greenville, SC on October 15 at Fireforge Brewery; thank you to Tristan Childress for a great presentation! We are so glad to have attendees at these events and a special thank you to our sponsors who make these possible. The upcoming Greensboro meeting will be on **October 29** at Kau with Nancy Hardison of Brooks, Pierce, McLendon, Humphrey & Leonard, LLP speaking on Brownfields and PFAS issues. We hope to see you there! You can sign up online or RSVP to me directly. Be on the lookout for some upcoming field courses in the works.

Remember that all undergraduate students enrolled in a geology or geoscience program in North or South Carolina are eligible to apply for our AEG Carolinas scholarship. Please consider applying this coming year (by **January 15, 2027**). We will be looking for new board volunteers in the 2027 and 2028 calendar years, so please reach out if you have interest!

I recently learned the sad news that the UNCC community lost a geology student and AEG student member, Olivia Pellegrino, to cancer on October 2. The entire geology community lost a phenomenal geologist and AEG member, Brian Bellis, P.G., unexpectedly on September 3. I'd like to share my condolences with their families and friends and with others who we have lost this year.

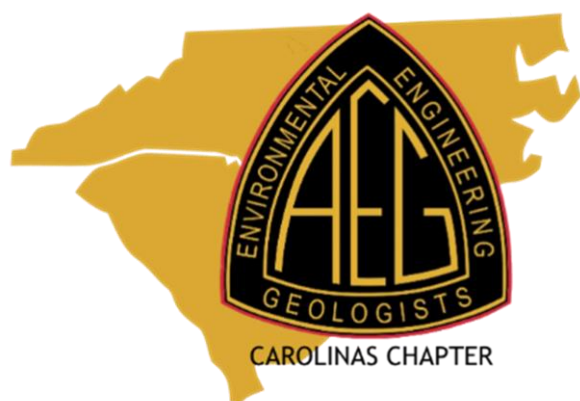
As always, thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers and sponsors. I hope that the fall brings with it some great hikes, campfires, stargazing, pumpkins, apples, and farms, and all the great things we love about a wonderful season we are so lucky to experience here in the Carolinas when the leaves change.

Cheers,

Laura R. Elliott, P.G.

AEG Carolinas Chapter Chair

laura.elliott@terracon.com



2026 Q2 Chapter Finances

By Walt Plekan, P.G., Carolinas Chapter Treasurer



2480 West Bay Dr #141

Belleair Bluffs, FL 33770-2620

Phone: 727-940-2658 Manager@aegweb.org

Chapter Financial Report: FY 2026

Chapter: Carolinas Chapter

Balance on Jan 1, 2026: \$ 11,600.33

Balance on December 31, 2026:

Chapter Officers:

Chair: Laura Elliott

email: laura.rob.elliott@gmail.com

ViceChair: Meredith Ambrose

email: mparnold11@gmail.com

Treasurer: Walt Plekan

email: walt.plekan@stantec.com

Secretary: Carsen Adams

email: carsen.adams@martinmarietta.com

CHAPTER REVENUE

	First Quarter Jan-Mar	Second Quarter Apr-Jun	Third Quarter Jul-Sept	Fourth Quarter Oct-Dec	YTD Total
Chapter Dues		\$ 670.00			\$ 670.00
Subscriptions					\$ -
Meetings	\$ 1,742.00	\$ 683.00			\$ 2,425.00
Short Courses					\$ -
Field Trips	\$ 640.00	\$ 186.00			\$ 826.00
Publications and Other Sales					\$ -
Bank/Investment Interest	\$ 0.28	\$ 0.27			\$ 0.55
Contributions/Gifts/Sponsorships	\$ 5,310.00	\$ 825.00			\$ 6,135.00
Advertising: Web & Newsletter					\$ -
Other Income					\$ -
Accounts Receivable					\$ -
Unaccounted					\$ -
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 7,692.28	\$ 2,364.27	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,056.55

CHAPTER EXPENSES

Meetings	\$ 2,599.80	\$ 3,963.24			\$ 6,563.04
Short Courses					\$ -
Field Trips					\$ -
Publications					\$ -
Advertising					\$ -
Printing, Postage	\$ 94.33				\$ 94.33
Student Support					\$ -
Merchandise Purchases					\$ -
BOD Meetings					\$ -
Banking Fees	\$ 293.44	\$ 65.23			\$ 358.67
Website/E-Communication					\$ -
Lobbying/Political Outreach					\$ -
Other Expenses:	\$ 170.00				\$ 170.00
Unaccounted					\$ -
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 3,157.57	\$ 4,028.47	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,186.04
Quarterly Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 4,534.71	\$ (1,664.20)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,870.51
FY Balance	\$ 16,135.04	\$ 14,470.84	\$ 14,470.84	\$ 14,470.84	\$ 14,470.84



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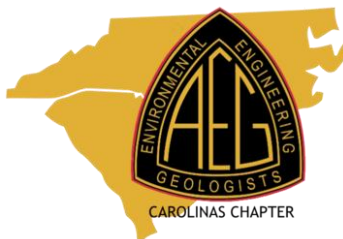
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AEG Dinner Meeting in Greensboro

The Carolinas Chapter of the Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists Guest Speaker:



**Nancy Hardison, Senior Counsel
Brooks Pierce Law Firm**

PRESENTATION

**Do You Feel Lucky?
Calculated Risks, Regulatory Uncertainty, and the Cost of Getting It Wrong**

MEETING DETAILS

Place: Kau, Revolution Mill, 2003 Yanceyville Street Greensboro, NC

Date: Thursday, October 29, 2026

Time: 5:30 PM socializing begins, 6:30 buffet dinner, 7:30 Nancy's Presentation

Cost: AEG members \$40, non-members \$55, Public-Sector Employees and Educators \$20, AEG Student Members Free.

Thanks to our drink sponsor for this meeting, Pace Analytical Services!

Reservations: Please make reservations with Laura Elliott by 6:00 PM by Monday, October 26th on the AEG Carolinas website: www.aegcarolinas.org/news. AEG AEG Student Members can make reservations on the website for \$1 or (for free) by sending an email to Laura at laura.rob.elliott@gmail.com. **You will receive 1 PDH!**

NANCY'S PRESENTATION

How can environmental professionals help clients make informed decisions when the consequences are uncertain, the regulatory framework doesn't provide clear answers, and the cost of eliminating uncertainty may be disproportionate to the risk itself?

Environmental projects frequently require balancing technical considerations, regulatory requirements, and business realities, often without the benefit of clear answers. Emerging contaminants, particularly PFAS, further complicate that calculus, raising new questions about the scope of environmental investigations, regulatory obligations, and the consequences of decisions made in the face of uncertainty.

Using real-world case studies, this presentation will explore how environmental professionals can help clients evaluate competing risks, anticipate regulatory consequences, and make informed, defensible decisions that balance environmental protection with practical project objectives.

NANCY'S BIO

Nancy is currently Senior Counsel at Brooks, Pierce, McLendon, Humphrey & Leonard, LLP in Raleigh, NC. For much of her career, Hardison's practice has centered on regulatory programs addressing the assessment and remediation of contaminated sites across North Carolina, advising on enforcement actions, compliance strategies, and risk-based remediation under state environmental laws. Her deep understanding of environmental assessment and remediation programs, combined with her ability to collaborate effectively with scientists and technical teams, ensures that contamination issues are addressed in ways that meet regulatory requirements while minimizing risks for all stakeholders. With her extensive background in regulatory oversight, Hardison is well-positioned to help clients manage environmental risks, navigate remediation obligations, and find practical solutions to the challenges posed by contaminated properties.

Nancy has represented state agencies in appeals concerning environmental regulations, including cases related to environmental compliance and enforcement decisions. She has handled litigation aimed at collecting civil penalties for violations of environmental laws, as well as leading enforcement efforts of environmental violators and negotiating settlement agreements to address ongoing risks.

Recognized by her peers for inclusion in *Business North Carolina's* "[Legal Elite](#)" in Environmental Law (2026)

University of North Carolina School of Law, J.D., 2003

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, B.A., 2000, Member of Golden Key Honor Society

2027 Membership Renewal- Time to Renew!

Have you renewed your membership yet?

Membership enrollment/renewal for 2027 is now open! Please renew (or enroll if you're not already a current AGE member) by visiting the [membership join/renew page](#) and following the instructions.

Please contact AEG Headquarters (contact@aegweb.org) or the Carolinas Chapter Membership Chair (Katie Adkisson, kaitlinadkisson@gmail.com) if you have questions or need assistance. You are always welcome to call Member Services to renew over the phone at (727) 940-2658 x 2004.



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Groundwater Professionals of North Carolina (GWPNC) Memorial Scholarship in Memory of Mike Stanforth, Former President

By Drew Baird (GWPNC)

Groundwater Professionals of North Carolina (GWPNC) is excited to announce the inaugural class of awardees of the Mike Stanforth Memorial Scholarship. Mike Stanforth, past president and long-time member of GWPNC, actively supported and contributed to the success and growth of the organization. The GWPNC Board and the entire professional community remember and miss Mike. We are honored to offer this scholarship to continue his legacy.

The purpose of the scholarship is to aid in educating future groundwater professionals by assisting eligible undergraduate students with the cost of their education. As such, GWPNC will annually award up to three \$2,000 scholarships to individuals who are enrolled in accredited schools in the State of North Carolina in majors that advance the science and profession of groundwater. Eligible majors include, but are not strictly limited to, hydrogeology, geology, earth science, geoscience, environmental science, environmental engineering, water resources engineering, and related majors.

GWPNC – with the generous support of The Stanforth Family – honors Mike by awarding scholarships to students studying fields related to our profession at North Carolina colleges and universities. Here are the recipients of the 2026 GWPNC Mike Stanforth Memorial Scholarship:





Jiahao Feng – PhD 2027

University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

Department of Environmental Sciences and Engineering

Jiahao's scientific innovation, translational achievement, international experience, leadership, and public service, is centered on one sustained commitment: protecting groundwater and the people who depend on it. Access to clean water influences health, opportunity, dignity, and the ability of communities to shape their own future.

His 12-year international research trajectory, has enabled him to bridge advanced groundwater treatment with env. biotechnology, developing bioremediation strategies that uncovered previously unrecognized capacities of native microbial communities to degrade complex mixtures of organic micropollutants.

In North Carolina, toxic metals in drinking-water sources remains a concern. Rather than focusing solely on removing metals from water, Jiahao investigates whether the gut microbiome can provide an additional biological barrier that limits metal absorption, tissue accumulation, and toxicity after contaminated water is consumed.

Jiahao hopes to build a career that turns knowledge into protection, innovation into access, and local solutions into ideas that can travel across borders.

Natalia Besswanger SE Account Manager	 BUCKEYE ELM CONTRACTING nataliab@buckeye-elm.com 800-404-9146 1333 Research Rd Columbus, OH 43230 Safe Experienced Trusted Environmental Solutions
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 SGS North America Inc. Industries & Environment 5024 A Departure Drive Raleigh, NC 27616	Paul Konnik Senior Account Manager m +1 (551) 238-0167 e Paul.Konnik@sgs.com www.sgs.com
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Cole Seifert – PhD 2029

University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

Department of Environmental Sciences and Engineering

Inspired at a young age by how his chemist mom approached her battle with chronic illness, Cole's research is focused on public health with a dedication to community outreach.

His graduate research is centered around PFAS contamination of public water systems throughout North Carolina using high throughput toxicokinetics and other computational approaches to translate risk from environmental concentrations of these compounds.

Given the reliance of the American population on drinking water in the United States sourced from groundwater (nearly 50%), Cole hopes to bridge the realms of engineering and public health research to safeguard drinking water quality.

As an environmental health researcher, Cole's research supports groundwater and drinking water challenges that affect communities throughout North Carolina.



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Nicolas Weaver – BS 2027

University of North Carolina Wilmington

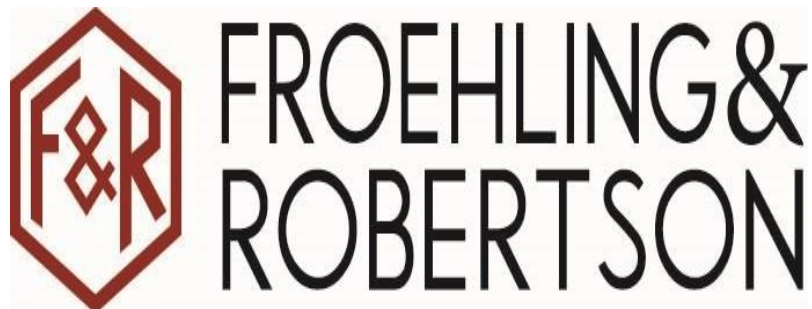
Department of Earth and Ocean Sciences

Nicolas's interest in the environment stemmed from his parents, both environmental consultants. By high school, that interest formed into a path in geology. He is actively involved with the Seahawk Wildlife and Earth Ocean Science Club at UNCW and has an internship this fall with CATLIN Engineers and Scientist working in the soils lab.

He is particularly interested in how groundwater moves through different geologic materials, how contamination spreads, and how these processes affect both communities and coastal environments. Living near the coast, he sees firsthand how erosion, tides, and shoreline change can influence groundwater flow, recharge, and the risk of saltwater intrusion. When storms cut back dunes or expose new layers of sand and sediment, he is excited to recognize the same subsurface structures he is learning about in hydrogeology class when evaluating contaminant pathways or aquifer behavior.

As a senior at UNCW, Nicolas aspires to work on environmental and site investigation projects and eventually earn his NC PG.

Contact us for more information or to support the GWPNC Mike Stanforth Memorial Scholarship by email at GroundwaterProfessionalsNC@gmail.com.





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AEG Annual Meeting Recap

By Katie Adkisson, P.G., Membership Chair & Newsletter Co-Editor

The 69th Annual Meeting of the Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists brought AEG members to Chattanooga, Tennessee, September 14–19 for a week of technical sessions, field courses, networking, and plenty of opportunities to experience the geology and history of the region. With the theme “Rivers, Rails, Roads, and Rocks,” the meeting made good use of Chattanooga’s unique setting and offered something for just about every interest within environmental and engineering geology.

Hutton and Smith, a geology themed brewery located in downtown Chattanooga, provided a special brew for the event that I’m fairly certain was enjoyed by all during the Icebreaker reception Tuesday evening.



Our very own Carolinas Chapter member, Paul Weaver (2025-2026 AEG National President) kicked off the meeting during the opening session Wednesday morning.



AEG Foundation Scholarship Opportunities

One reminder coming out of the opening session is that **AEG Foundation scholarship applications are due January 15, 2027**. The Foundation offers a variety of scholarships supporting students pursuing environmental and engineering geology, including assistance for tuition, field camps, field research, and other educational expenses.

The **Carolinas Scholarship**, established with a gift from the Carolinas Chapter, supports undergraduate students pursuing geologic studies at accredited universities in North or South Carolina. The 2026 recipient was Chandler Noel Deese of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Students interested in applying should start early, particularly because applications may require transcripts and letters of recommendation. The AEG Foundation states that complete scholarship applications and supporting materials must be received by **11:59 p.m. EST on January 15** each year.

This is a great opportunity for students in our region, so please pass the information along to students who may be interested.

Introducing the 2026–27 Jahns Distinguished Lecturer

Another highlight of the meeting was the announcement of **Dr. Wendy Zhou** as the **2026–27 AEG/GSA Richard H. Jahns Distinguished Lecturer**. Dr. Zhou is a professor of geological engineering and director of the GIS & GeoInformatics Program at Colorado School of Mines. Her background includes geological engineering and computer science, and her research incorporates geospatial analysis and field-based datasets.

The Jahns lectureship was established jointly by AEG and the Geological Society of America's Environmental & Engineering Geology Division in 1988 to honor Dr. Richard H. Jahns and promote student awareness of environmental and engineering geology. Each year, the appointment recognizes an individual whose research or professional practice has contributed to the advancement of the field.

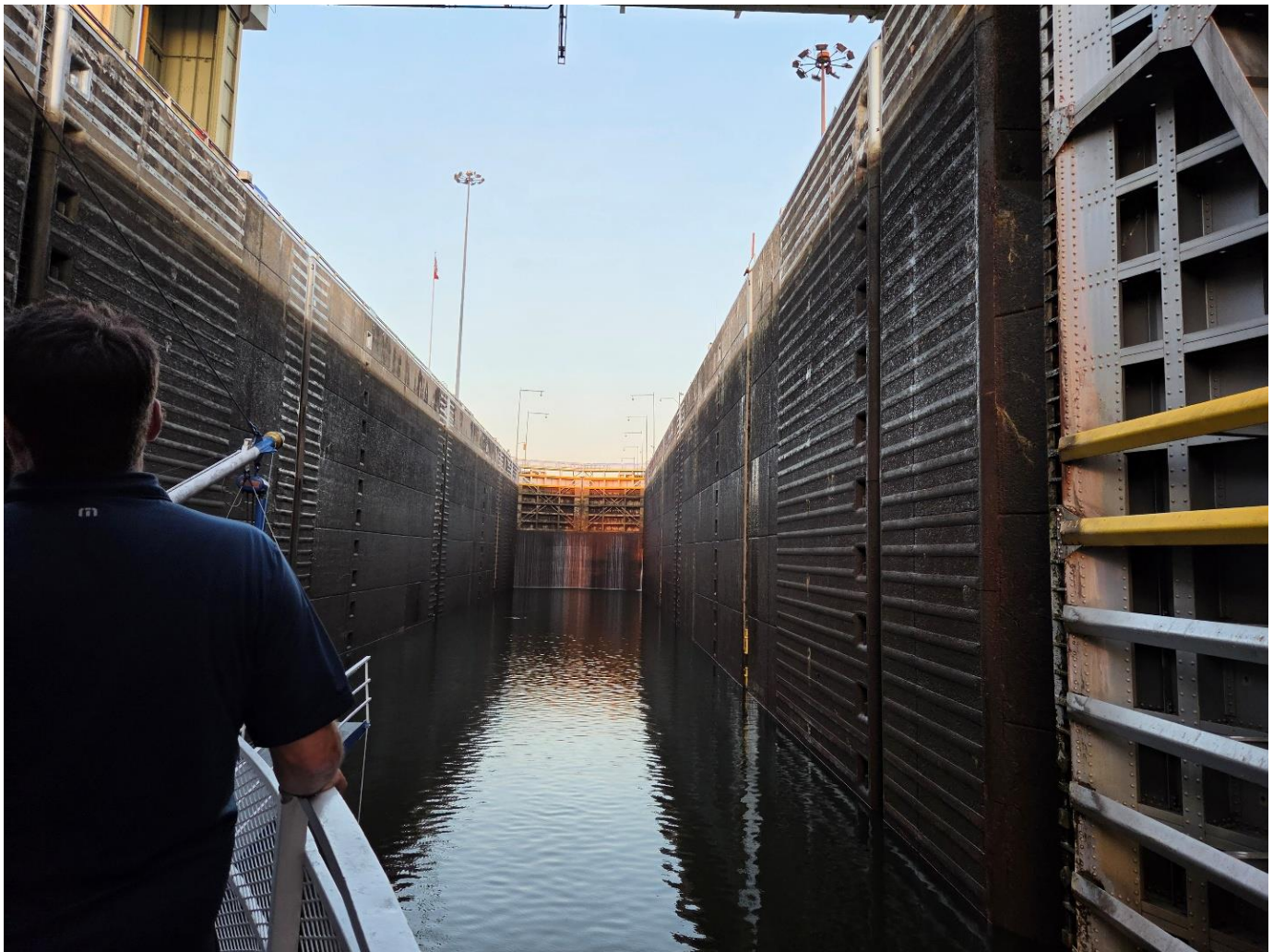
Dr. Zhou will continue that tradition through lectures at academic institutions and AEG chapter meetings during her term. The meeting program also included a preview of some of her planned Jahns lectures, highlighting her work with landslide activity recognition, remote sensing, and geospatial approaches to engineering geology.



A Night on the Tennessee River

Of course, an annual meeting isn't all technical sessions—and one of the most enjoyable parts of this year's meeting was the **Special Event aboard the Southern Belle**.

I attended the riverboat cruise, and it was a great evening. The event was well attended, making it a fun opportunity to spend time with fellow AEG members outside of the conference rooms. The cruise included dinner and a trip along the Tennessee River, with the highlight being the transit through the navigation lock at **Chickamauga Dam**. The program specifically designed the cruise to showcase the scenery of the Tennessee River while also giving attendees an up-close look at an important piece of regional infrastructure.



Closing Session

Paul closed out the meeting during the closing session by highlighting the talks he gave at different AEG Chapters throughout the year. Each of the officers gave their report on the work they've done throughout the year, as well as acknowledging the many volunteers it takes to keep AEG going at the local and national levels. The annual meeting ended with the installation of the 2027-2027 Executive Officers and was closed out by incoming President, Mark Swank.



Looking Ahead to Sacramento

As one annual meeting wraps up, another is already on the horizon. **The 2027 AEG Annual Meeting will be held in Sacramento, California**, which is particularly appropriate as the organization approaches its 70th anniversary. Sacramento is recognized as the birthplace of AEG, where the organization was founded in 1957.

For those who have never attended an AEG Annual Meeting, Chattanooga was a good reminder of how much more the meeting offers than a technical program alone. Between field courses, presentations, exhibitors, social events, and conversations with colleagues from across the profession, there are plenty of opportunities to learn something new and strengthen connections within AEG.

I hope to see many of our Carolinas Chapter members in Sacramento next year!

Thank You to Our Sponsors and Vendors!

A special thank-you is also due to the many sponsors and vendors who supported the 2026 AEG Annual Meeting. The exhibit hall provided a great opportunity to connect with companies, consultants, organizations, and fellow professionals from across the environmental and engineering geology community.

The annual meeting would not be possible without the support of our sponsors and vendors. Their contributions help make the technical sessions, field trips, networking opportunities, and other events that bring our profession together possible. We are grateful for their continued support of AEG and for their investment in our professional community.

Thank you to everyone who sponsored, exhibited, volunteered, and helped make this year's meeting a success!





Dennis J. Anderson Memorial

ASBOG is saddened by the passing of past Executive Committee President Dennis Anderson. Dennis dedicated more than 20 years to ASBOG and played a pivotal role in shaping the organization into what it is today. In addition to being an accomplished geologist and passionate advocate for professional licensure, Dennis had the remarkable ability to bring people together. His warmth, humor, and generosity made everyone feel welcome, and his steady leadership helped shape the licensure process that protects the public today.

Dennis mentored many of us, championed the value of professional licensure for geologists, and never missed a chance to celebrate the people around him. His legacy will live on through the profession he served and the many friendships he built.

Our thoughts are with Dennis's family, friends, and colleagues. He will be deeply missed.

<https://www.bramanmortuary.com/obituaries/dennis-j-anderson>

Funeral Arrangements

Tuesday, October 20: 16701 S. Street, St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Church, Omaha, NE

- 5pm – 7pm Visitation

Wednesday, October 21: 16701 S. Street, St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Church, Omaha, NE

- 9:30am – 10:30am Visitation
- 10:30am – 11:30am Funeral Mass and Interment



Aaron Gross, PG
Senior Geologist & Drilling Coordinator



aaron.gross@summitde.com



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AEG Annual Meeting- Geology Behind the Attractions: Lookout Mountain Geo-Tourism Field Course

By Katie Adkisson, P.G., Membership Chair & Newsletter Co-Editor

The 2026 AEG Annual Meeting in Chattanooga, Tennessee, offered a variety of opportunities to get out of the conference room and into the field. The **“Lookout Mountain Geo-Tourism”** field trip took a somewhat different approach from a traditional geology field trip. Rather than visiting isolated outcrops or geologic sites, we explored four well-known tourist attractions—The Incline, Point Park, Rock City, and Ruby Falls—and looked at the geology, engineering, and history that make each location possible.

It was a hot day, and much of the trip was spent outside, but the heat did little to diminish the experience. In fact, one of the most interesting aspects of the trip was seeing how geology was woven into places that many visitors experience primarily as recreational or historic attractions.

The Geologic Setting

Lookout Mountain is part of the Cumberland Plateau and lies near Chattanooga's position at the boundary between the Cumberland Plateau and the Valley and Ridge physiographic province. The area's landscape reflects a long history of changing depositional environments, tectonic deformation, weathering, and erosion.



Google Earth image data: ©2026 Airbus, Landsat/Copernicus.

The rocks exposed around Lookout Mountain record a transition from shallow marine environments to terrestrial environments. Mississippian carbonate rocks—including the Fort Payne Chert, Warsaw Limestone, St. Louis Limestone, Monteagle Limestone, Hartsell Formation, and Bangor Limestone—form the lower part of the mountain. These units contain fossils including bryozoans, crinoids, brachiopods, and corals. Above them, the Pennington Formation records a shallow marine environment, followed by several hundred feet of Pennsylvanian clastic rocks deposited in terrestrial settings associated with deltas, rivers, and swamps.



Image Credit: ZackFrank/stock.adobe.com.

Today, the contrast between these rock types is readily visible in the landscape. The more resistant Pennsylvanian sandstones and conglomerates form the steep bluffs around the summit, while the underlying shales and carbonate rocks produce gentler slopes. This differential erosion gives Lookout Mountain much of its distinctive profile.

Stop 1: The Incline



Our first stop was the **Lookout Mountain Incline Railway**, where geology and engineering are quite literally connected by steel rails.

The Incline climbs approximately 1,450 vertical feet from Chattanooga's St. Elmo neighborhood to the top of Lookout Mountain. The 4,972-foot-long funicular reaches a maximum grade of 72.7 percent, or about 36 degrees, near the upper station – the steepest in the world. As we rode toward the summit, the increasingly steep terrain provided an immediate sense of Lookout Mountain's topography.

The Incline begins in Mississippian carbonate rocks and ends in the Pennsylvanian clastic rocks that form the resistant bluffs near the summit. The increasing gradient near the top reflects the transition into these more resistant bluff-forming rocks.

For an engineering audience, however, the Incline offers another particularly interesting story.

In December 2024, a rockfall on the side of Lookout Mountain caused a wildfire that significantly damaged the railway. According to the field guide, freeze-thaw action loosened bedrock joints near the summit. As the resulting boulders moved downslope, they collided with other rocks, trees, and structures, generating sparks that ignited vegetation. The resulting fire damaged the railway's main cable, rails, and timber crossties. The Incline eventually reopened in July 2025 after several months of repairs.

It was a striking reminder that the same geology that creates an attraction can also create engineering challenges and natural hazards.



Stop 2: Point Park



From the Incline, we walked approximately a quarter mile to Point Park at the northern end of Lookout Mountain. Here, the field trip shifted from experiencing the mountain's topography to seeing how that topography has influenced both human history and modern infrastructure.

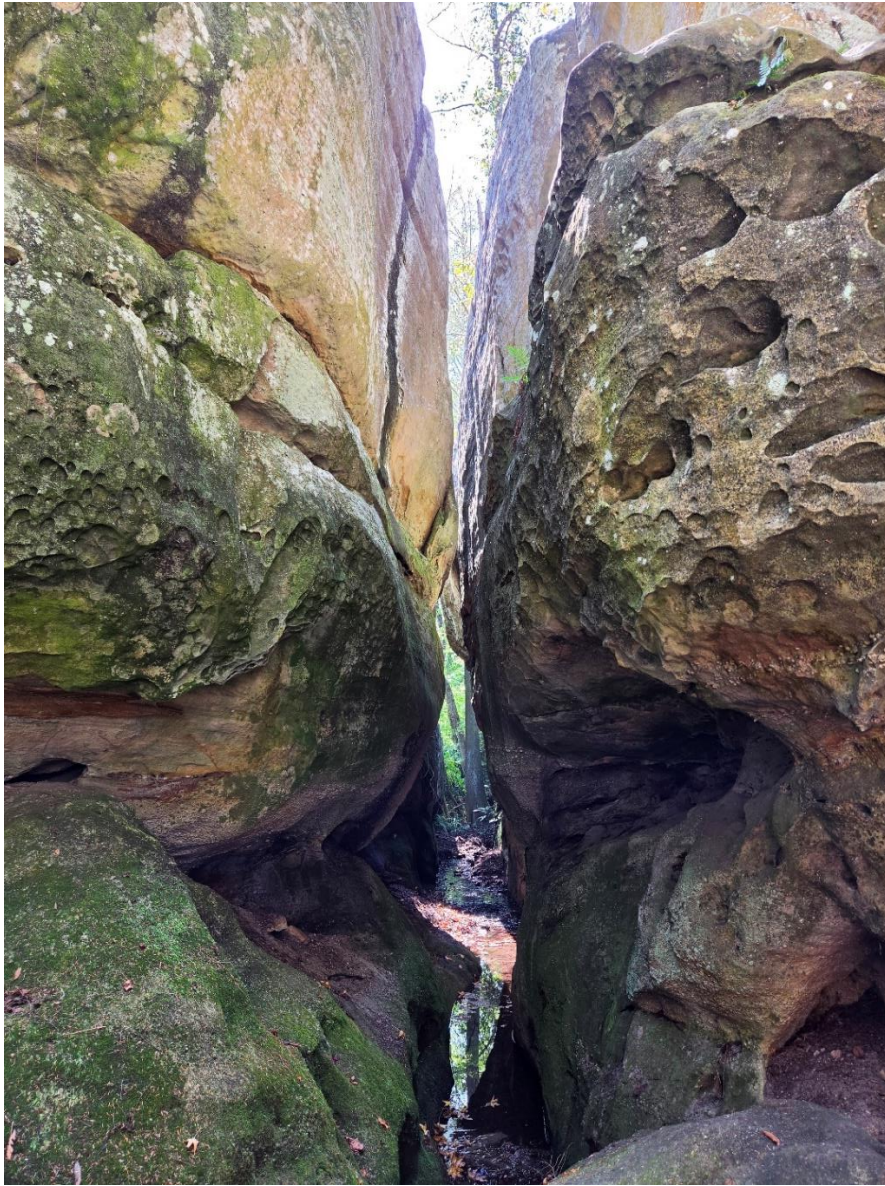
From the overlooks, Point Park provides expansive views of Chattanooga, the Tennessee River, Moccasin Bend, and the surrounding ridges. The Tennessee River makes a dramatic bend around the northern end of Lookout Mountain before cutting through the elevated rocks of the Cumberland Plateau to form the Tennessee River Gorge.



The views also provided an opportunity to see how people have taken advantage of the landscape. Across the valley, the Raccoon Mountain Pump Storage Plant uses the elevation of the plateau and its proximity to the Tennessee River as part of its operation. The surrounding landscape also contains extensive hiking and biking trails, while the Mississippian limestone geology has supported quarrying and cement production in the region.

Walking through Point Park also brought us close to exposures of the Pennsylvanian sandstone and conglomerate. Features such as cross-bedding and ripple marks were prevalent throughout the trails in the park.

Point Park is part of the Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park complex and is best known for its connection to the Civil War. The steep terrain of Lookout Mountain played an important role in the Chattanooga Campaign, including the November 1863 Battle of Lookout Mountain, famously known as the “Battle Above the Clouds.” The battlefield is another example of how geology and human history can become inseparable: the mountain's elevation, slopes, benches, and cliffs influenced how people moved and fought across the landscape.

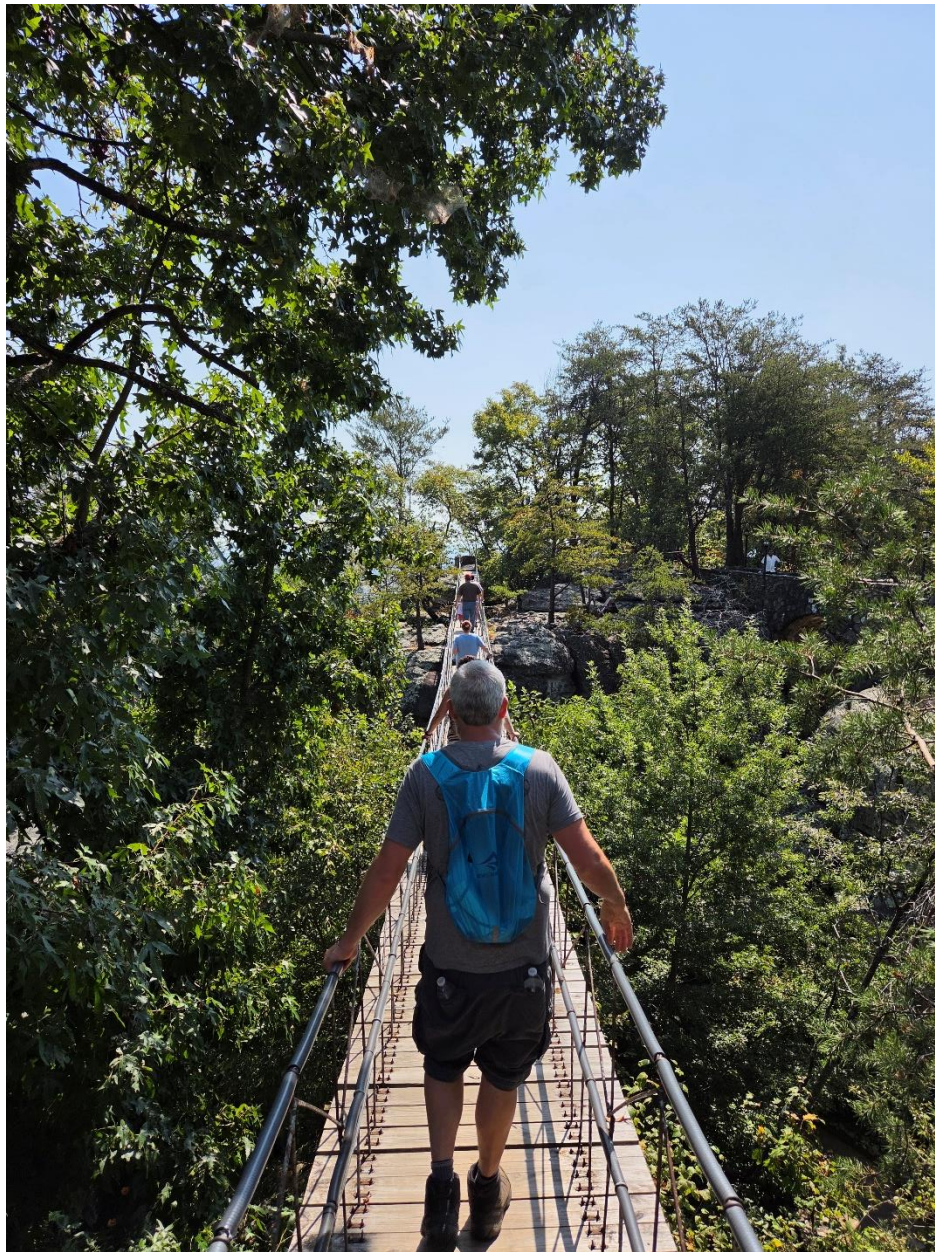
Stop 3: Rock City

Rock City is developed in the Warren Point Sandstone, a Pennsylvanian unit that contains both massive and cross-bedded sandstone as well as lenses of quartz-rich conglomerate. Variations in cementation help explain why some portions of the rock weather more readily than others. Iron-rich groundwater has also produced colorful Liesegang banding within portions of the sandstone.

The most memorable feature is the network of narrow passages between enormous blocks of sandstone. These openings developed along joints in the rock. The joints themselves formed in response to tectonic stresses, while subsequent weathering and erosion enlarged them.

The field guide identifies a leading hypothesis that the unusually wide passages were enhanced during Pleistocene periods when temperatures were considerably cooler than today. Water entering the joints could freeze and expand, gradually forcing the sandstone blocks apart through ice wedging. Importantly, the area was not covered by continental ice; rather, the process involved colder conditions and repeated freeze-thaw cycles.

For visitors, these features are simply part of the Rock City experience. For geologists and engineers, however, they provide an excellent, three-dimensional demonstration of the relationship between fractures, groundwater, weathering, and erosion.



The attraction itself is also an interesting example of geotourism. Rock City Gardens opened in 1932 after Garnet and Freida Carter developed trails through the existing rock formations. What began as a landscaped rock garden eventually became one of the region's best-known tourist destinations. Freida's love for German folklore is seen all through the park in the form of gnomes and whimsical creatures hidden in nooks and crannies if you are looking closely enough.



Stop 4: Ruby Falls

Ruby Falls is part of the Lookout Mountain cave system and developed in the Bangor Limestone. The same carbonate geology that forms many of the valleys and gentler slopes around Lookout Mountain also provides the conditions necessary for cave development.

Inside Ruby Falls, the geology is particularly apparent because the cave's relatively straight route toward the waterfall reflects joint-controlled development. Water preferentially followed fractures in the limestone, enlarging them over time.

The story of Ruby Falls also provides another excellent intersection of geology, engineering, and tourism. In the late 1920s, Leo Lambert undertook an ambitious effort to access the cave from above. A shaft was sunk 420 feet into Lookout Mountain, eventually intersecting the cave. The shaft was completed in January 1929, and construction involved removing approximately 51,000 cubic feet of rock.

Ruby Falls opened to the public in 1930 and has remained a major attraction ever since.

And after spending a warm afternoon on Lookout Mountain, the cool temperatures underground were certainly welcome.



Asheville Dinner Meeting Recap

By Jen Thomas, P.G., Past Carolinas Chapter Chair

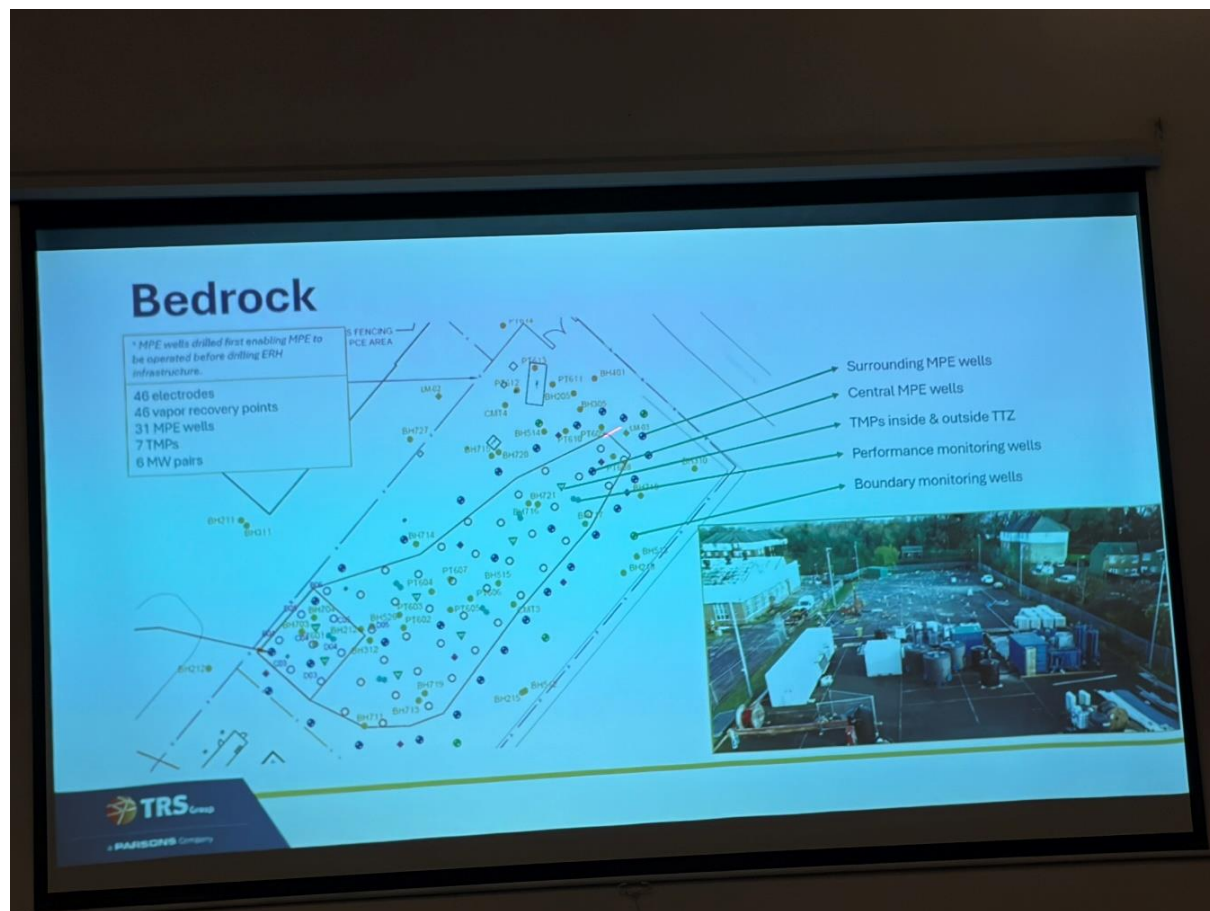
On September 10, 2026, we gathered at the Hi-Wire event space in Asheville and enjoyed some brews and, being the Carolinas Chapter, barbeque. **Susan Averitt** gave the presentation on thermal remediation with plenty of slides on how it works, when it is used, and what it looks like set up at a site. Susan is a long-time AEG member and a former chapter chair.

At dinner time, I realized, to my horror, that the caterer had not provided plates or utensils and this was not something the venue had. **Walt Plekan** thought quickly and bought some off of a food truck that was luckily outside and well-stocked. I did not have to run to a store and significant delays to dinner and disruption of the schedule were averted.

This Asheville meeting was the best attended of ones I've spearheaded. For years after Covid, attendance at this and other AEG meetings was reduced. I'm excited to see so many people come out and hope the trend continues at AEG events throughout the Carolinas.







Olivia Pellegrino Memorial

By Jake Armour, UNC- Charlotte Professor

It is with a heavy heart that I let you know of the passing of AEG student member Olivia Pellegrino, who succumbed to complications from cancer Friday, October 2nd, 2026 at the age of 22. Olivia was an undergraduate student at UNC Charlotte in the Dept. of Earth, Environmental, and Geographical Sciences pursuing Bachelors of Science degrees in both Earth & Environmental Sciences and Geology.

She was poised to graduate and was an extremely active member of both the student GEO Club and the UNCC chapter of AEG. She was a teaching assistant for a number of faculty, attended a number of conferences and field trips in the area. As such, she knew or interacted with a good many of us. We are all shaken by this news. I encourage you to reach out to each other for comfort and to share stories of the time we were able to spend with such a special person.

A celebration of life was held Thursday, October 15th from 7-10 pm in Charlotte. In lieu of flowers, please consider a contribution to Building Olivia's legacy - Scholarship & Memorial.

<https://everloved.com/life-of/olivia-pellegrino/?flow=201>



Greenville, SC Dinner Meeting Recap

By Carsen Adams, P.G., Carolinas Chapter Secretary and Rick Kolb, P.G., Carolinas Chapter Advisor and Past Chair

The Carolinas Chapter of AEG represents both North and South Carolina, but typically we hold chapter meetings in only four cities in North Carolina. Our chapter's board of directors would like AEG to serve practitioners in the Palmetto State by starting a separate chapter of AEG in South Carolina. We held chapter meetings in Charleston in 2022 and in Greenville in 2023; both were received well by the attendees. In an attempt to gain support in establishing a new chapter in South Carolina, we held a chapter meeting on October 15th in Greenville, and we have begun tentatively planning to hold chapter meetings in Columbia and Charleston in the first half of 2027. We hope these meetings will engage geoscience professionals across South Carolina and help attract individuals who would be interested in helping to form a new chapter.

Dr. Tristan Morgan Childress was the speaker at the Greenville meeting, which we held at Fireforge Crafted Beer in downtown Greenville. We had 35 in attendance, including eight students from UNC Charlotte and one from the University of South Carolina. Tristan works for the National Energy Technology Laboratory, Critical Mineral and Materials Program. His presentation was titled "The Race for Critical Minerals: American Resources, Policy, and Programs" and featured many slides with tables that provided an overview of critical minerals and, among other topics, how reliant the United States is on foreign resources, often with political consequences – much to ponder and worry about.

Todd Elmore

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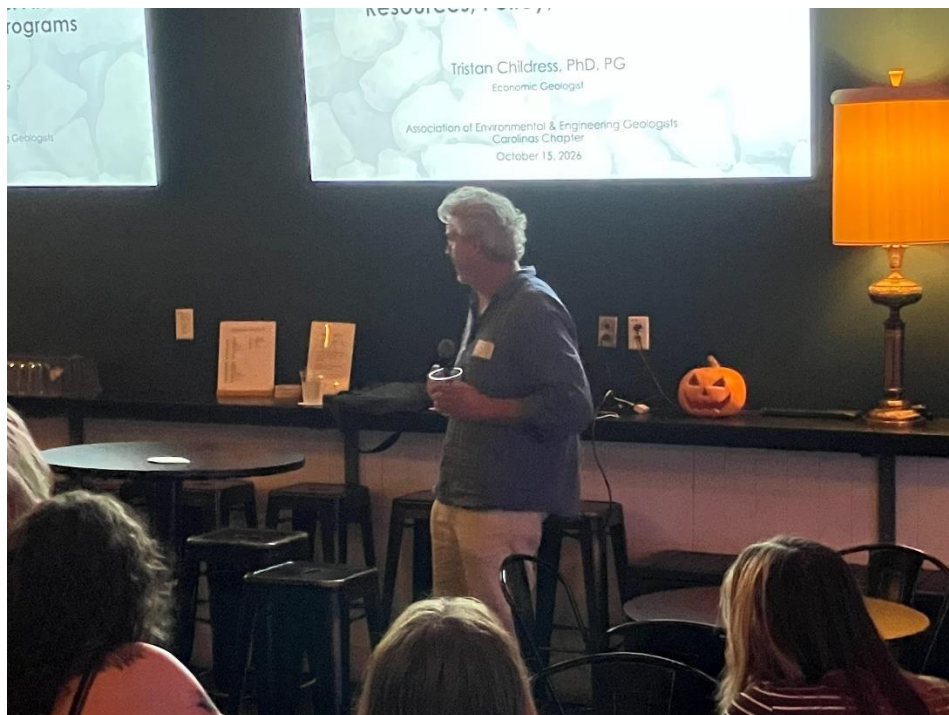
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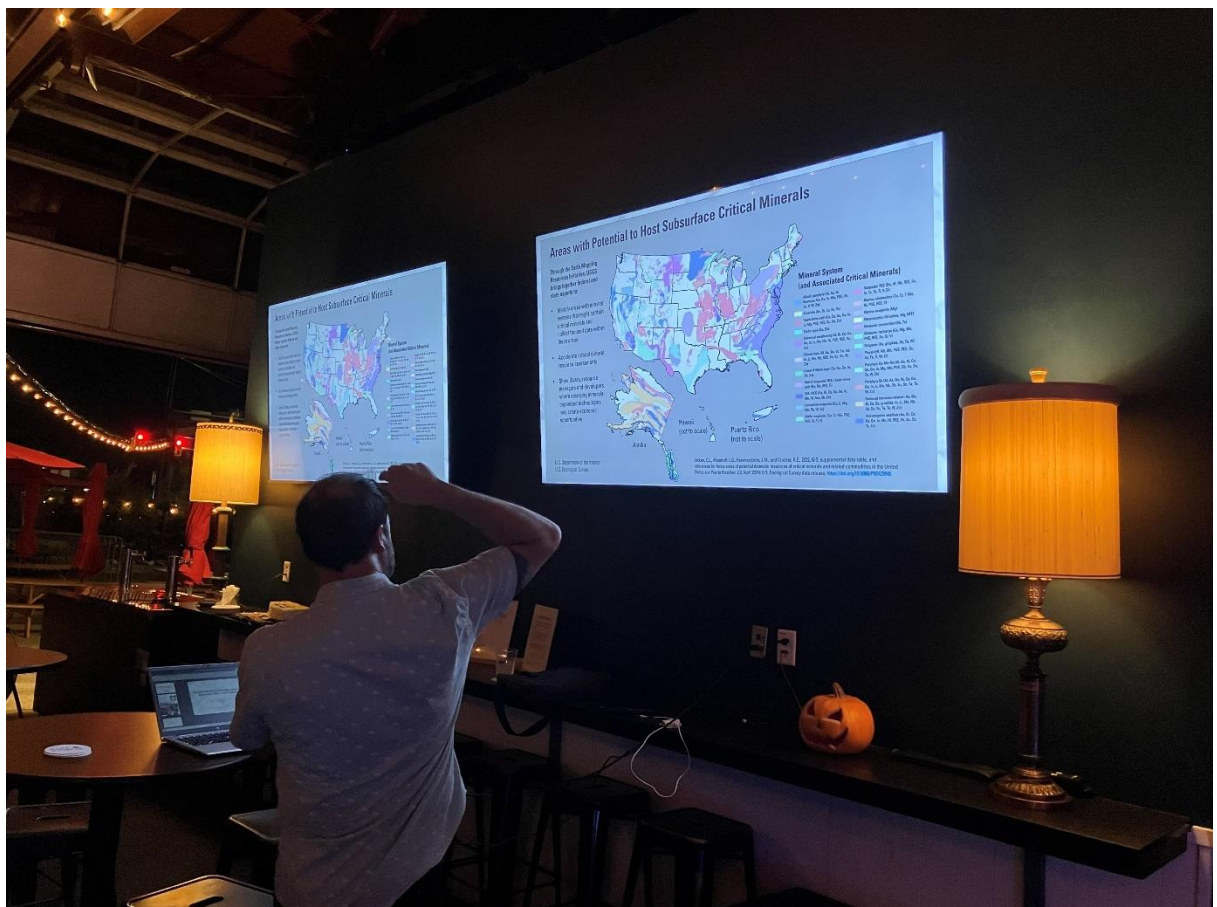
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Tristan provided this link to the slides he showed during his presentation:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iBK88mNtWo3mAVxiGhkmJSU6bDIdP2Du/view?usp=drive_link







Following our meeting, Tristan provided the following for those of you (and not just geologists) who would like to know more about critical minerals and what our country is doing.

Please keep your chapter aware of CORE-CM (<https://www.energy.gov/hgeo/project-selections-foa-3077-regional-scale-collaboration-facilitate-domestic-critical-minerals>). We kick off this month. It is a well-funded nation-wide program that will involve potentially 1000 or so people and dozens of entities. It will be as large as people are aware of it. I think my working groups during the last phase equaled about 100 or so people, and the scope was much smaller. Georgia Tech is running Region 1 (<https://sciences.gatech.edu/news/mining-new-possibilities-critical-minerals-mapping-stronger-us-supply-chain>) and Virginia Tech will be running Region 2 (<https://news.vt.edu/articles/2025/02/virginia-tech-selected-to-lead--10-million-critical-mineral-rese.html>). I know these people, so please let your chapter know they can reach out to me for more information or reach out directly to the PIs and CC me if they want (tristan.childress@netl.doe.gov).



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Program Coordinator, at jmgroom@waketech.edu*



Carbon Ore, Rare Earth, and Critical Minerals (CORE-CM)

By Tristan Childress, Ph. D, P.G.

Recently, I had the delight of presenting on the topic of critical minerals to the Carolinas Chapter of the AEG in Greenville, SC. I met many wonderful people there who are involved in (or are on their career path to) very interesting and impactful environmental work. While our respective fields may not seem obviously related on the surface, there is ample opportunity for members of the AEG to get involved with ongoing nationwide Department of Energy-sponsored critical mineral programs.

I would like to bring to your attention the Carbon Ore, Rare Earth, and Critical Minerals (CORE-CM) Initiative (<https://www.energy.gov/hgeo/project-selections-foa-3077-regional-scale-collaboration-facilitate-domestic-critical-minerals>), which has now entered Phase 2. CORE-CM is a well-funded nationwide program that will involve hundreds of people from academia, government, the private sector, tribal associations, and more. Broadly, the goal of this initiative is to survey the U.S. for critical mineral potential from unconventional feedstocks, such as coal waste materials (ash, acid mine drainage, etc.) or atypical geological sources (e.g., rare earths from coal, lithium from produced water), and, just as importantly, to document our nation's infrastructure and existing industrial capabilities in an effort to map out and kickstart new critical mineral supply chains, from upstream extraction to downstream products.

Notably, CORE-CM Regions 1 and 2 are led by Georgia Tech (<https://sciences.gatech.edu/news/mining-new-possibilities-critical-minerals-mapping-stronger-us-supply-chain>) and Virginia Tech (<https://news.vt.edu/articles/2025/02/virginia-tech-selected-to-lead--10-million-critical-mineral-rese.html>), respectively. I know many of these people from the previous phase, which began in 2021, and I will be leading several of the working groups connecting all eight regions over the course of the initiative. I highly

encourage everyone to reach out to the researchers leading those regions to see if and how you can contribute, and please feel free to include me in your communications. If the previous phase taught me anything, it's that these projects have a pressing need for real-world expertise and experience, especially when it comes to working with waste materials.

The CORE-CM Initiative is just one step on a very long road ahead for the United States if we want to become self-sufficient and competitive with the economic powerhouse that is China. Many other projects, programs, and efforts are being put forth by the DOE, as well as the Departments of the Interior and Defense, among others. If this topic interests you, rest assured it isn't going to cool down any time soon, and please feel free to reach out to me any time to learn more. It was a pleasure presenting to you all, and I hope to reconnect soon!



Image Credit: National Energy Technology Laboratory

Carolinas Chapter Volunteer Opportunities

Would you like to become a volunteer for the Carolinas Chapter?

The Carolinas Chapter is actively looking for volunteers in North and South Carolina, especially as we try to re-invigorate our South Carolina members and hold more events in South Carolina. With that, we’re looking for member volunteers that are gracious enough to spare some time to help plan meetings and/or field courses in the area. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please reach out to the chapter chair and vice chair- Laura Elliott and Meredith Ambrose (laura.elliott@terracon.com and mparnold11@gmail.com).

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AEG Carolinas Chapter Board of Directors Meeting

August 18, 2026

By Carsen Adams, P.G. Carolinas Chapter Secretary

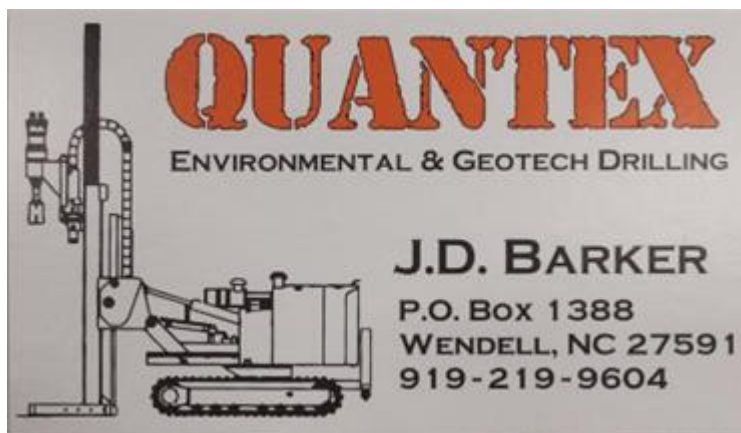
Call to Order—Laura Elliott

Roll Call— Laura Elliott, Meredith Ambrose, Walt Plekan, Carsen Adams, Jen Thomas, Katie Adkisson,

Andrew Beaty, Michael Daniels, Paul Weaver

Upcoming Events

- Discussed upcoming meetings and planning needs
 - Asheville (September 10, 2026): Susan Avritt presenting on thermal remediation. Price will remain \$40 for members, \$55 for non-members, and students free.
 - Jen to contact beverage sponsors.
 - Greenville (October 15, 2026): Tristan Morgan Childress presenting on critical mineral development.
 - Greensboro (date TBD): Laura coordinating details to find location. Nancy Hardison to present on Brownfields or PFAS.
 - Paul suggests we try a different venue this year, perhaps Fat Dogs Grill and Pub?
 - Laura to address AV issues at Kau to see if resolved from last year and research possible venues.



Key Decisions and Actions

- Maintain non-members meeting fee at \$55.
- Begin email blasts immediately for Asheville and Greenville meetings, post announcements on LinkedIn.
- Katie to investigate livestreaming meetings for students and members unable to make it to dinner meetings in person.

Upcoming Conferences and Social Events

- National AEG meeting: September 13-19, 2026 in Chattanooga, TN. Katie, Paul, Jen attending; Laura virtually.
- NC Environmental Conference (NCEC): October 6-7, 2026. Laura attending.

Finances— Walt

- Walt gave an update on Carolinas Chapter finances- checking and savings are well funded, for now, but will decrease in the near future due to chapter meetings and continuing cost increases
- Discussion of potentially funding \$3,000 scholarship donation from the chapter, future chapter dues increase, and fundraising opportunities.
 - Discussion of raising the cost of field courses to help fund the scholarship and to help offset costs of increasing dinner meeting costs.
- Brainstormed ideas for raising money at chapter events to contribute to the scholarship fund.



Committee Updates

- Meredith to prepare fall GeoNews issue.
- Student chapters will be notified of upcoming meetings in Asheville and Greenville, SC

Other Business

- Review website mailing list sign-up functionality. Carsen has been updating the website mailing lists manually each quarter.
- Continue succession planning discussions and document leadership terms.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS—2026

Geological Events in the Carolinas

Courtesy of AEG Carolinas Chapter—www.aegcarolinas.org. Last updated October 13, 2026

Send updates/corrections to Rick Kolb, rick.kolb1@gmail.com

Meeting Date, Time, and Location are Subject to Change—Please Verify Prior to the Meeting

Date: Thursday, October 29, 2026

Event: AEG Carolinas Chapter Fall North Carolina Meeting

Location: Kau at Revolution Mill, 2003 Yanceyville Street in Greensboro

Cost: \$40 for AEG and ASCE members, \$55 for non-members, \$20 for public-sector employees and teachers; free for AEG Student Members w/ college ID. ***Registration will be \$5 more at the door.***

Details: 5:30-6:30 PM socializing, 6:30-7:30 PM buffet dinner; 7:30-8:30 PM speaker

Presentation: *Do You Feel Lucky? Calculated Risks, Regulatory Uncertainty, and the Cost of Getting it Wrong*

Speaker: Nancy Hardison, Senior Counsel, Brooks Pierce law firm

Registration: <http://www.aegcarolinas.org/news/>

Date: October 30 thru November 1, 2026

Event: Carolina Geological Society's Annual Meeting and Field Trip: *Uncovering the Stratigraphy of South Carolina's Coastal Plain in Horry County, South Carolina, Pliocene to Present*

Location: Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Registration: Opens late August

Date: November 3-5, 2026

Event: AEG's Landslide Super School

Location: Denver West Marriott in Golden, Colorado

Details: The landslide super school will include two classroom days and one field day to give attendees a depth of knowledge in landslide identification, characterization, and mitigation. Planned topics include landslide susceptibility and inventories, morphology and landforms, data collection and investigation, and stability modeling and mitigation design.

Register: www.aegevents.org/landslides-super-school

Date: Thursday, November 5, 2026

Event: North Carolina Association of Environmental Professionals Regulatory Real Talk

Location: 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Stantec; 801 Jones Franklin Road, Suite 300 in Raleigh

Details: www.ncaep.org/event-6868781

An informative discussion from Tommy Fennel (District Regulatory Chief), Tyler Crumbley (Deputy Chief), Chris Hopper (Raleigh Project Manager), and Joshua Tutt (Washington

Regulatory Specialist). There have been several changes in the way the USACE project managers interact with their customers and emphasis shifts in local priorities. During this meeting, the USACE will share some suggested efficiencies, ongoing challenges, and lessons learned. Speakers also hope to solicit input from the consulting community regarding the challenges, successes, and frustrations working with the Regulatory Program.

Date: Thursday, November 12, 2026

Event: Groundwater Professionals of North Carolina 2026 Fall Mini-Conference – presentations on chlorinated VOCs and DNAPL, NCDEQ updates, ethics for environmental professionals, and presentations by two awardees of the Mike Stanforth Memorial Scholarship

Location: Lenny Boy Brewing Company, 3000 South Tryon Street in Charlotte

Details: 10:00 AM-5:00 PM, Social 5:00-7:00 PM

Registration: General - \$80, government employees - \$65, students, invited speakers, and GWPNC board members are free; registration includes PDH's, lunch, drinks, appetizers

PDH credits: 6 hours

Dates: March 18 & 19, 2027

Event: ASBOG FG and PG Exams

Location: The Prometric Testing Centers in North and South Carolina

Contact: www.ncblg.org and <https://llr.sc.gov/geo/>

Date: April 25-27, 2027

Event: GSA Southeastern Section Annual Meeting

Location: Hyatt Regency Savannah in Savannah, Georgia

Details: <https://www.geosociety.org/events/section-meetings/southeastern>

Date: October 25-30, 2027

Event: AEG 70th Annual Meeting

Location: SAFE Credit Union Convention Center in Sacramento, California

Details: <https://www.aegannualmeeting.org/future-aeg-meetings>

Date: September 12-16, 2028

Event: AEG 71st Annual Meeting

Location: Steamboat Grand in Steamboat Springs, Colorado

Details: <https://www.aegannualmeeting.org/future-aeg-meetings>



AEG CAROLINAS CHAPTER – SPONSOR INFORMATION

The Carolinas Chapter of AEG supports many of its activities with financial assistance provided by our sponsors. Our activities include quarterly meetings, periodic field trips and seminars, a quarterly newsletter, and email announcements about our meetings and geoscience related activities.

We offer several levels of sponsorship, but they all have one goal: to keep the sponsor's name in front of our members and to bring business to your company. Most of our members are practicing professionals with responsibility for selecting subcontractors, so our group is a great place to find new customers and to catch up with existing clients in an informal setting.

Our sponsors provide the financial support that allows us to have reasonably priced dinner meetings, host seminars, provide discounted dinner meeting costs for students and teachers, underwrite the cost of newsletters and our web site, provide geoscience mentors for students and young professionals, and support science education tools to our teachers and in our schools. All costs listed below are per year and end in December. New sponsorships received after October will continue to December of the following year.

Silver Sponsor (\$275):

GeoNews Newsletter: Business card size ad (2" high x 3-1/2" wide), four times per year.

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Meeting Exhibits: Space for tabletop display at one meeting. Cost of meeting waived for one person on the exhibit date.

Email Announcements: Listing of your company name on each AEG Carolinas Chapter email announcement (our email list is currently over 1,000 people)

Web Page: Acknowledgement on the AEG Carolinas Chapter Web Page, www.aegcarolinas.org, with a link to your site.

Gold Sponsor (\$400):

GeoNews Newsletter: Quarter-Page ad (4-1/2" high x 3-1/2" wide), four times per year.

Meetings: Listing on a Sponsor Poster, located at sign in table. Verbal acknowledgement by name in Chairman's introductory comments.

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Web Page: Acknowledgement on the AEG Carolinas Chapter Web Page, www.aegcarolinas.org, with a link to your site.

Platinum Sponsor (\$550):

GeoNews Newsletter: Half-page ad (4-1/2" high x 7" wide), four times per year.

Meetings: Listing on a Sponsor Poster, located at sign in table. Verbal acknowledgement by name in Chairman's introductory comments.

Meeting Exhibit: Space for tabletop display at three meetings. Cost of meeting waived for one person on the exhibit dates.

Email Announcements: Listing of your company name on each AEG - Carolinas Chapter email announcement (our email list is currently over 1,000 people)

Web Page: Acknowledgement on the AEG Carolinas Chapter Web Page, www.aegcarolinas.org, with a link to your site.

Titanium Sponsor (\$650):

Same as Platinum, but with a FULL PAGE ad in GeoNews. Limited to two sponsors per year.

GeoNews Newsletter Sponsorship Only

Businesses or individuals can also advertise in GeoNews without being a full sponsor. The annual rates for advertising in GeoNews are as follows:

Business Card	\$ 40.00
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Half Page	\$ 100.00
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Please complete the form below and mail it to Rick Kolb, AEG Carolinas Sponsorship Chair. Please email Rick if you have any questions (contact information below).

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