

**National Association of Geoscience Teachers
Far Western Section
2011 Annual Report**

Report Submitted by Lynn Fielding

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Far Western Section Conferences

Fall 2010 Field Conference

Held on October 8, 9, and 10, 2010

Hosted by California State University Fresno in Fresno, California

Paul Troop spearheaded the Fall 2010 Far Western Section of the National Association of Geoscience Teachers Conference at California State University Fresno in Fresno, California. On Saturday morning, full day field trips departed from the campus to explore the local area geology. The Saturday evening banquet was held at the University Center on campus. Dinner was followed by a lecture on local area geology and the Far Western Section Business Meeting. In addition to guidebooks, rock and mineral specimens were available for sale on Saturday evening. After a continental breakfast on Sunday morning, half day field trips departed from California State University Fresno.

Spring 2011 Field Conference

Held on March 25, 26, and 27, 2011

Hosted by California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in Pasadena, California

The Spring 2011 Far Western Section of the National Association of Geoscience Teachers Conference was a great success. There were 117 participants which were represented by 83 geoscientists, 11 Pacific Coast College student helpers, and 23 volunteers who led field trips, organized workshops, conducted tours, and helped with the evening presentations.

Participants checked in Friday evening while snacking on Mexican hors d'oeuvres. Many then took a tour of the Caltech Seismo Lab led by Margaret Vinci. In light of the recent March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, Caltech Professor Tom Heaton kindly offered to squeeze in an additional presentation on this event. His presentation was followed by Caltech Professor Jennifer Jackson's presentation entitled Good Vibrations Inside the Earth.

Saturday there were two full day field trips and two half day field trips. Caltech Professor Mike Lamb and graduate student Jeff Prancevic led a group up the arroyo behind the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) to explore erosion and sedimentation in the wake of the recent fire and subsequent heavy rains. Occidental College Professor Don Prothero led a group to Devils' Punchbowl and Red Rock Canyon. Pacific Coast College Professor Bruce Carter led a group to see San Gabriel Anorthosite and the San Andreas Fault. University of Alaska at Fairbanks Professor Elisabeth Nadin and Mt. San Antonio College Professor Rebecca Walker led a group to Vasquez Rocks.

Also on Saturday, three workshops were held. Caltech Professors Ken Farley, John Eiler, and Brian Wernicke led a workshop entitled Low-T thermometry and thermochronometry and applications and included dating the formation of the Grand Canyon, Caltech Professor Joann Stock led a workshop on Earthquake magnitude, energy, and focal mechanisms sometimes referred to as beach balls, and Caltech Professor Tom Heaton led a workshop on Operations of Community Seismometer Network entitled "How your laptop can help scientists better understand earthquakes".

After a full day of workshops and field trips, participants were revived Saturday evening with a Mexican dinner in Caltech's Winnett Lounge. Caltech Professor Jess Adkins then gave an engaging and entertaining presentation entitled Journey to the bottom of the sea: how deep-sea corals calcify and why we care.

Sunday morning, after a nourishing omelet bar breakfast, two more workshops were held. University of California at Santa Barbara Professor Emeritus Tanya Atwater led Plate Tectonic Rotation of the Transverse Ranges: what happened, how we know it happened, and how it created Southern California's unique geography, climate, ocean currents and biological richness. University of Alaska at Fairbanks Professor Elisabeth Nadin and Caltech grad student Belle Philibosian led Historical earthquakes and uplift and subsidence of Sumatra from coral growth rings. In addition, since two workshops had filled up and had waiting lists, their leaders, Professors Stock and Atwater, graciously repeated their workshops on Sunday.

Finally, thanks are extended to all the volunteers, as well as Heather Steele who arranged logistics and meals, and Lisa Christiansen who created the field guide.

Report completed by Laurie Kovalenko, Tectonics Observatory, Caltech, and Jeff Grover, Questa College.

Future Far Western Section Conferences

Fall 2011

The Far Western Section Fall 2011 Conference will be hosted by Copper Mountain College on November 11, 12, and 13, 2011. Information on local area motels and restaurants will be provided. Bruce Bridenbecker is the conference organizer and trips are planned in and around the Joshua Tree Area. Registration will open on Friday evening and a reception and campus tour are planned. The Far Western Section Business Meeting will be held on Friday evening as well. On Saturday morning, full day trips will depart from Copper Mountain College with Dee Trent and Bruce Bridenbecker as trip leaders. Arrangements are being made for dinner on Saturday evening at a local restaurant. On Sunday morning, half day trips will also depart from Copper Mountain College.

Spring 2012

In the spring of 2012, El Camino College, in Torrance California will host the Far Western Section Conference on March 2, 3, and 4, 2012 at the Desert Studies Center in Zzyzx, California. This conference is being organized by Lynn Fielding with the full support of the Earth Science Department at El Camino College. Field trips will focus on various aspects of the Mojave Desert and are currently being planned. Zzyzx (which is pronounced zy – zicks with emphasis on the “zy”), California has a colorful history of its own and once was a resort which featured mineral springs and mud baths, and was renowned as a health resort. Some of these facilities are partially preserved and make for wonderful photographic opportunities with the background of Soda Dry Lake. Today, the California State University system has established a consortium which administers the Desert Studies Center, facilitates research in a variety of disciplines, and aids the preservation of the endangered Mohave tui chub.

Baker, California is located 11 miles to the north east from the Desert Studies Center and has a variety of motels, restaurants, gas stations, and other facilities, some of which are quite unique. “Home of the World's Tallest Thermometer” is Baker's claim to fame and the height of the thermometer at 134 feet or 41 meters was selected when the community recorded the highest temperature ever recorded in the United States (in Death Valley) at 134 degrees Fahrenheit in 1913. However, it is also a gateway to Death Valley and other scenic areas of the Mohave Desert. Many travelers come to know Baker as they fill their gas tanks during their excursions to and from Las Vegas, Nevada to Los Angeles, California. Baker, California is approximately 177 miles or 285 kilometers north east of Los Angeles, California. Las Vegas, Nevada is located about 88 miles or 142 kilometers to the north east of Baker, California.

The Desert Studies Center has a meeting room, an area for social gatherings and poster sessions, audio visual capabilities with wireless internet, dormitory facilities (advanced registration required and individuals bring their own bedding or sleeping bag), shower facilities, a chef who will prepare the hot breakfasts, dinners and packaged lunches, a store which features items related to Zzyzx, wonderful star gazing opportunities (clear skies permitting), and a wonderful view of Soda Dry Lake, the California Fan Palms and the Chub Pond. All of the field trips will leave from the Desert Studies Center.

In addition to the field trips, workshops, the banquet, and the NAGT Far Western Section business meeting, student posters are strongly encouraged. It is hoped that each school with faculty in attendance will have at least one student poster. The best posters will receive special recognition. Please plan to attend!

Please contact Lynn Fielding at lfielding@elcamino.edu with any questions about the spring 2012 NAGT Meeting.

Additional Far Western Section Activities

Scholarships

Each year, the Far Western Section awards scholarships to deserving geoscience students. This year the Far Western Section provided a \$500.00 scholarship to J. Henessey.

Publications

Sales of Guidebooks that are produced for each conference continue to provide the financial support for the scholarships awarded by the section. A list of publications available for purchase is posted on the section web site at <http://nagt-fws.org>.

Membership

The Far Western Section of the National Association of Geoscience Teachers presently has 191 members.

Far Western Section Financial Report

Balance on Hand as of October 2010 \$9,888.13

Income

Refund Fall 2010 Conference	1,439.87
Membership (175 members)	437.50
Publication Sales	1,684.10
Interest	<u>8.52</u>
	\$3,569.99

Expenses

California Sales Tax	114.00
Reprint Field Guide	165.69
Website	65.69
Scholarship (J. Henessey)	500.00
Advance (Fall 2011 conference)	1,000.00
Fall 2010 Expenses	1,624.50
Postage for Publications	<u>101.36</u>
	\$3,571.24

Balance on Hand as of August 28, 2011 **\$9,886.88**

Amount of CD \$28,756.01

The Far Western Section is in good financial shape due to holdings in a CD. However, publication sales have declined mainly due to decreased library budgets and a decrease in membership from 243 in 2010 to a present membership of 191.

The Far Western Section looks forward to the year ahead and the upcoming field conferences that are currently being planned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lynn Fielding
Far West Section President
September 15, 2011