

2013 Geosciences Congressional Visits Days

More than 70 geoscientists from around the country traveled to Washington, D.C., this September to spread the word about the importance of geoscience to society. During the 6th annual Geosciences Congressional Visits Days (Geo-CVD), an event in which professional geoscience societies arrange meetings between lawmakers and geoscientists from within their districts, participants from more than 20 states met with their representatives to discuss the importance of geo-related research happening within their districts. This year's theme targeted the importance of geoscience research and development to protecting public health and safety and supporting strong economic and national security.

On Wednesday, September 18th, Geo-CVD participants had more than 140 meetings with congressional members or their staff. The scientists were split into geographic teams, and visited with representatives from their districts, as well as certain committee staff. The participants discussed the role of geoscience in keeping the U.S. competitive, ensuring a steady supply of resources, sustaining and maintaining the environment, and preparing for and mitigating against the human and financial tolls of natural and man-made disasters. The reception from decision-makers was positive yet constrained; they expressed their understanding of the critical nature of geoscience research but struggled to make definitive commitments in light of current fiscal restrictions. The event kicked-off with a half-day workshop on September 17th, focusing on how to effectively communicate with representatives and their staff. Held at the headquarters for the Association of Public Land Grant Universities (APLU) in downtown D.C., the afternoon was split between reviewing how Congress works and the current climate in Washington, D.C., and prepping participants to effectively convey the importance of their research to their representatives. The training concluded with a panel discussion and question and answer session between participants and three Congressional Geoscience Fellows currently working in Capitol Hill offices. Participants and staff then adjourned to the Rayburn House Office Building for the U.S. Geological Survey Coalition Reception, which honored Representatives Ken Calvert (R-CA) and Peter DeFazio (D-OR). The two men received the 2013 USGS Coalition Leadership Award for promoting the importance of USGS scientific programs.

Geosciences Congressional Visits Days aims to foster strong relationships between policymakers and geoscientists who can serve as non-partisan, trusted sources of scientific information.

Geosciences societies that participated in Geo-CVD 2013 include: The American Geosciences Institute, the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, the American Geophysical Union, the American Institute of Professional Geologists, the Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography, the Association of American State Geologists, the Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists, the Geological Society of America, the National Association of Geoscience Teachers, the Paleontological Society, the Seismological Society of America, the Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration, and the Soil Science Society of America.
