

The Opportunity for Outreach

Why take the time and effort to provide science enrichment, especially with all these complicating issues? Most obviously, if working professionals do not, then few others that can offer the same insights will. Some teachers have strong science backgrounds, others do not. Some teachers love science, others might be intimidated by it. Most teachers will welcome the interaction, and almost all kids will be excited when someone special comes to class. Most science professionals find the experience equally rewarding, and even inspirational.

Geoscience professionals have extensive academic training and applied experience. We can provide both the factual answers and “back-story” to answer questions from students, and the skills to help guide students in conducting their own investigations. We can bring Earth materials to the class, or take the class outside to experience the Earth close-up. We can help discuss practical Earth resource issues, and connect modern lifestyles with critical resource issues. We know that gasoline does not come from the pump, that floods do not strike randomly, and that money spent on water witching goes down the drain. We also know how to obtain and evaluate data that can help people make wise practical and even political solutions.

Earth science in particular needs support at the K-12 level. In many school districts, formal Earth science content is last covered in middle school (see Curricula). Many college-educated U.S. citizens (e.g. voters) had their last formal exposure to Earth resource and hazard-related science in seventh or eighth grade. Despite the practical implications, many educators still view Earth science as less rigorous than physics or chemistry.
