

## Critical Issues Program: 2017 in Review



As the first month of 2018 draws to a close, we thought it'd be a good time to look back over 2017 in the Critical Issues program. We would like to thank you for being part of the Critical Issues community this year, whether you were one of the 10,000+ people who watched a webinar live or on YouTube, gave us feedback to improve what we're doing, or said hello on Twitter. We are always working on ways to bring you more useful, expert, impartial geoscience information or opportunities to discuss geoscience issues, and 2017 was our busiest year yet. Below are some highlights; we invite you to click through to delve further into anything of interest, discover something new, and join us as we move forward into 2018:

We kicked off the year with a website redesign to make it easier for you to find useful geoscience information. (We recommend checking out any of the 5 main topic pages to get started!) In May, we completed our annual website review –adding new resources and updating information on every single webpage to ensure that you will find high-quality, useful information to help answer your questions. Website improvements over the year included:

- New subtopic pages on solar energy, wind energy, hydropower, and groundwater
- Many new factsheets, case studies, and FAQs, covering topics ranging from tar sands, LIDAR, weather vs climate, groundwater use in the U.S., recycling as a source of mineral commodities, and much more. A list of new content from each month can be found in the Critical Issues monthly roundup blog posts.
- Over 50 new interactive maps added to our Maps and Visualizations portal to help you find accessible (and beautiful) geoscience information in your area.

*Thank you* to the over 3600 people who registered for or attended our five webinars in 2017! Slides and video recordings for each webinar talk are available on our website for you to catch up on anything you missed:

- Assessing, Mitigating, and Communicating Flood Risk
- State Responses to Induced Earthquakes
- Planning for Coastal Storm and Erosion Hazards
- Building the Modern World: Geoscience that Underlies our Economic Prosperity
- Geologic Mapping to Empower Communities: Examples from the Great Lakes

Another exciting development in 2017 was the launch of the AGI-AIPG Geoscience Online Learning Initiative (GOLI), which provides opportunities for professionals and students alike to take free online geoscience courses for their professional development. Each Critical Issues webinar from 2015 to 2017 provides the basis for a GOLI course, and some more technical courses are also available. All courses are free for anyone to take, and Continuing Education Credits from AIPG are offered for a small fee to those who complete the courses with a 70% passing grade or better. Check out the GOLI course offerings [here](#) and brush up on a wide variety of geoscience issues.

In summer 2017, we published videos of talks from the 2016 Critical Issues Forum, “Addressing Changes in Regional Groundwater Resources: Lessons from the High Plains Aquifer”. Two days of excellent discussion among the fifty Forum

participants, along with speaker talks and break-out sessions, were distilled into a summary report that you can read [here](#). The report is freely available for PDF download or may be ordered in print.

Our summer intern in 2017 was Katja Luxem, who worked with us on every aspect of the Critical Issues program and produced many wonderful information products, including an introductory factsheet on managed aquifer recharge (MAR), a sheet with four case studies of MAR in California, and a great FAQ explaining what “biomining” is. Thanks for all your hard work, Katja!

- If you are a geoscience student who is interested in how geoscience is communicated to decision makers, particularly at the state and local level, we invite you to apply for our 2018 Summer Critical Issues internship by March 1st.

We attended some great conferences, including the National Conference of State Legislatures’ Annual Legislative Summit, the Geological Society of America Annual Meeting, and the American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting, where we met and talked with people from across the geosciences and decision makers from the community to the national level.

As of January 1, 2018 the Critical Issues Twitter account (@AGI\_GeoIssues) is no longer tweeting... we’ve moved! We are now sharing general interest tweets from AGI’s primary Twitter account (@AGI\_Updates), including the popular #MapOfTheDay series, and will share policy-focused tweets from our sister program @AGI\_Policy. Please follow those accounts on Twitter for the most up to date information from Critical Issues.

And last but not least, if you are particularly interested in geoscience-related policy issues at the *national* level, our colleagues in AGI’s Geoscience Policy program have recently released their Annual Review of 2017, which covers everything you need to know about the last year of federal geoscience policy.

Thank you again for making 2017 an exciting year, and we can’t wait to see how we can partner with you in 2018.

Cassaundra Rose, Ben Mandler, Leila Gonzales, and Maeve Boland

## Tags:

- critical issues, policy, geotimes, blog
-