



4220 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22302-1502  
703-379-2480;  
Fax: 703-379-7563  
www.agiweb.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 16, 2010

Contact: Andrea Martin  
asm@agiweb.org

## AGI Welcomes Karst Waters Institute as 47<sup>th</sup> Member Society

Alexandria, VA – The Karst Waters Institute (KWI) has joined the American Geological Institute (AGI) as the Federation’s 47<sup>th</sup> Member Society.

AGI Executive Director, P. Patrick Leahy says of the addition, “The Karst Waters Institute is a wonderful addition to AGI’s federation of earth science societies. With KWI’s inclusion we are welcoming another valuable section of the earth science community to ensure that the needs of all earth scientists are being met.”

KWI is a non-profit institution whose mission is to improve the fundamental understanding of karst water systems through sound scientific research and education of professionals and the public. KWI uses a multi-disciplinary approach to research karst aquifers and terrains.

More than 25 percent of the world’s population either lives on or obtains its water from karst aquifers. In the United States, 20 percent of the land surface is karst, predominately in Florida, Texas, Missouri, and the Appalachian Mountains region. Nearly 40 percent of all groundwater used for drinking comes from karst aquifers. Common geological characteristics of karst regions include caves and caverns, unpredictable but sometimes prolific water supply, ground subsidence, sinkhole collapse, and groundwater contamination problems. A wide variety of organisms live in karst aquifers, such as bats, salamanders, beetles, and fish. As such, many of these animals are indicators of the quality of the groundwater. By joining AGI, Karst Waters Institute will increase awareness within the geoscience community and with the general public of the geological and ecological importance of karst terrains and aquifers.

The American Geological Institute is a nonprofit federation of 47 geoscientific and professional associations that represents more than 120,000 geologists, geophysicists and other earth scientists. Founded in 1948, AGI provides information services to geoscientists, serves as a voice of shared interests in the profession, plays a major role in strengthening geoscience education, and strives to increase public awareness of the vital role the geosciences play in society’s use of resources, resiliency to natural hazards, and interaction with the environment.

###