

GEOSCIENTISTS-IN-THE-PARKS PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS – FY 2009

(Lisa Norby 10/1/09)

To enable parks to address unmet geoscience needs, fifty-six (56) Geoscientist-in-the-Parks (GIP) volunteers were placed throughout the NPS in fiscal year 2009. Forty-seven of the positions were 3 month GIP positions and nine (9) were longer term (4 month – 1 year) Guest Scientist positions, including a year-long roving paleontologist position filled by retired NPS paleontologist Ted Fremd. The GIP Program has grown 51% over the past 2 years (27 positions in 2007, 43 in 2008, and 57 in 2009), reflecting the high value parks perceive from these geoscience positions.

Highlights of the GIP program in 2009 include:

- Through program partnerships and the use of inexpensive but professional volunteers, NPS dollars were leveraged at a rate of 5:1.
- NPS received over \$1.38 million in geoscience project work, for NPS expenditures of about \$283,000.
- External program partners contributed over \$104,000 in support of GIP positions in parks.
- The Geological Society of America remains the key program partner, maintaining the on-line recruitment system and providing most of the non-NPS funding.
- GIPs were placed in all NPS regions and the Washington office, with about half located in parks in the Intermountain and Pacific West Regions.
- The GIP volunteers represented a wide variety of geologic disciplines, ranging from caves/karst to volcanology specialists.
- Half of the GIP projects involved geologic inventory and monitoring, with about another 20% each addressing interpretation/education and research.
- The GIP Intranet and Internet sites were substantially improved with updated guidance on how to obtain a GIP, a searchable database to find parks that have previously had GIPs, and links to all available GIP products (reports, videos, trail guides etc.). Since 2008, all position descriptions and applications are done on-line through GSA's on-line system.
- Database enhancements include live on-line access to GSA's program information as well as an updated Access database to track program and funding information.

The lack of sustained program funding remains a key challenge for the program, which currently operates on a variety of annual funding sources. Long-term success and viability for the GIP program requires base program funding.

Summary tables for the FY 2009 GIP Program are shown below.

GIP Positions per Region / Office:

Region	# Positions	Parks
Alaska	4	DENA (2), GLBA, LACL
Intermountain	19	BRCA, CAVE, CORO, DETO, DINO (2), FLFO (2), GLAC, GRCA, GRTE (2), GRSA, GUMO (2), ROMO, YELL (3)
Midwest	3	BADL, LECL, PIPE
National Capital	3	ANTI, Center for Urban Ecology, PRWI
Northeast	2	DEWA (2)
Pacific West	11	CRMO (2), HAFO, MORA (3), ORCA (2), SEKI (2), YOSE
Southeast	6	GRSM, MACA (5)
Washington Office	8	Geologic Resources Division
TOTAL	56	

Number of positions for each project category:

Project Category	# Projects
Interpretation / Education	11
Inventory and Monitoring	33
Multi-faceted	2
Research	10

Number of positions for each geology discipline:

Discipline	# Projects
Cave / Karst	12
Coastal	2
Geologic Hazards	4
General Geology	21
Geothermal	2
Hydrology	1
Paleontology	13
Volcanology	1

Education Level:

Educational Level	# Positions
Student	29
B.S. / B.A. degree	3
Graduate degree, unspecified degree	2
M.S. / M.A. degree	1
PhD degree	2
Unknown	19

Ethnicity:

Ethnicity	# Positions
Caucasian	31
Hispanic	2
Unknown	23

2008 Carryover projects completed in FY 2009:

Office	# Positions	Project
Geologic Resources Division	3	GIP program support, paleontology inventories, energy and minerals support
Office of Climate Change	1	Climate change program support

Value of GIP Volunteer Hours

GIPs are considered volunteers under the NPS' Volunteer in Parks Act (16 USC Sec. 18g). The GIP Program contributed 36,304 volunteer hours in fiscal year 2009. Using a conservative estimate of the hourly value of a volunteer, (\$20.25/hr estimated by the Federal Interagency Team on Volunteerism), the GIPs work is valued at \$735,156 which equates to a value per total dollar spent of 1.8:1. Using a more specific value of \$38.06 for geoscientist work (Bureau of Labor Statistics: <http://www.bls.gov/oes/2008/may/oes192042.htm>), the GIP hours are valued at \$1,381,730 equating to a return of 3.6:1 per total dollar spent, including program partner expenditures.

Benefit/Cost to NPS

When assessed in terms of value received for NPS dollars expended, the NPS received almost a 5:1 payback, demonstrating that the GIP program is highly cost-effective for the NPS. NPS received over \$1.38 million in geoscience work at a cost to NPS of only \$282,653.

GIP Program Funding in Fiscal Year 2009

Expenditures in FY 2009:

Funding Source	Amount
Geologic Resources Division	\$104,621
Inventory & Monitoring Program (GRI, paleontology inventories)	\$47,116
NRPP funding	\$58,752
Parks	\$57,664
Park Associations	\$14,500
Other agencies – USGS	\$16,500
Geological Society of America (in-kind contribution, GSA Foundation)	\$72,553
Association for Women Geoscientists (AWG)	\$7,500
National Association of Geoscience Teachers (NAGT)	\$8,000
TOTAL	\$387,206 ¹

¹ Expenditure summary is based on latest data available in the NPS GIP database (as of 10/1/09). NPS share of program costs is: \$282,653.

Partnerships

Number of GIP positions supported by each partnership:

Partner	# Positions
Geological Society of America	49
National Association of Geoscience Teachers	4
Association for Women Geoscientists	3

Geological Society of America partnership

- NPS partners with GSA's GeoCorps America program (program that places geoscientists in NPS, USFS, and BLM units to assist with their geoscience needs)
- 13 year partnership, core partnership to the GIP program
- negotiated new 5 year Cooperative Agreement in 8/08, amended in 2009
- GSA annually contributes a minimum of \$50,000 towards the program
- maintains online system for posting position descriptions and applications, and provides day-to-day administrative program support

National Association of Geoscience Teachers (NAGT) partnership

- 5 year agreement with NAGT (2006 – 2010)
- Places 3 Earth Science teachers annually at Mammoth Cave NP to assist their Earth science needs and to build long-term relationships with neighboring schools and communities
- NAGT pays participant's stipend and for Continuing Education Credits
- NAGT is considering continuing program at another park in 2010 or 2011

Association for Women Geoscientists (AWG) partnership

- 2-year agreement (current agreement ended in 2009) to place 3 geoscientists annually in parks to assist with their geoscience needs
- AWG pays \$2,500 stipend for each participant
- AWG is considering whether they would like to partner with GSA GeoCorps America program in 2010

GIP Website Enhancements

- Updated GIP Program internet and Intranet sites:
 - ✓ Internet: <http://nature.nps.gov/geology/gip/index.cfm>, site contains program overview, capability to search for parks that have had a GIP and to download completed GIP products, and tips on obtaining geoscience jobs in the NPS
 - ✓ Intranet: <http://inside.nps.gov/waso/waso.cfm?prg=748&lv=4>, site contains program overview and provides guidance on obtaining GIP assistance
- Upgraded NPS Access database to include all program information that was previously stored in simplified Access database, Word documents and Excel spreadsheets. Database includes project and geoscience participant information, funding data, funding status, and a list of all products completed for each project.
- Worked with GSA to upgrade their online application system and program database.

GIP Program Fund-raising

- Continued to seek sustainable funding for the program (prepared NRPP funding and OFS funding proposals).
- Worked with National Park Foundation to raise program funds.
- Worked with NPS Partnerships Program (WASO Youth Programs office) and NRPC Partnerships office to secure sustainable program funding
- To-date, no sustainable program funding has been obtained. Program funding continues to be from year-end surplus GRD and other NRPC funds.

GIP Program Balance available for 2010 GIP Program: **\$275,995** (after obligating year-end GRD and NRPC funds).