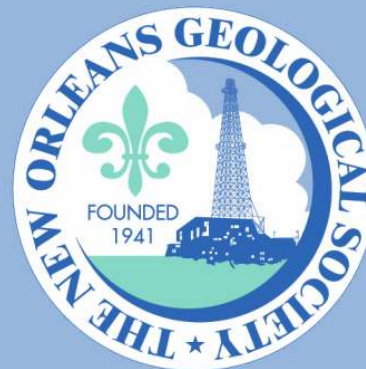


# NOGS LOG



December 2009

Volume 50, Number 6

## Upcoming Events and Activities

### December 4 - NOGA-NOGS Christmas Holiday Party

At Metairie Country Club. See announcement on page 13.

### December 6-8 - 29th Annual GCSSEPM Foundation Bob F. Perkins Research Conference

"Unconventional Resources: Making the Unconventional Conventional."

In Houston. See announcement on page 8.

### December 7 - NOGS Luncheon

\*\*\* At the Holiday Inn Downtown Superdome \*\*\*

\$2.00 validated parking in hotel garage

Guest Speakers Dr. M. Roy Gani & Dr. Nahid DS Gani, Department of Environmental Sciences at University of New Orleans, will present:

"Blue Nile Incision, Ethiopian Plateau Uplift, and Human Evolution."

(See page 7 for Abstract and Biographies)

HOLIDAY INN DOWNTOWN SUPERDOME      ADMISSION:

Check with concierge or

front desk for location

Lunch served at 11:30am

**with reservation .....** \$30.00

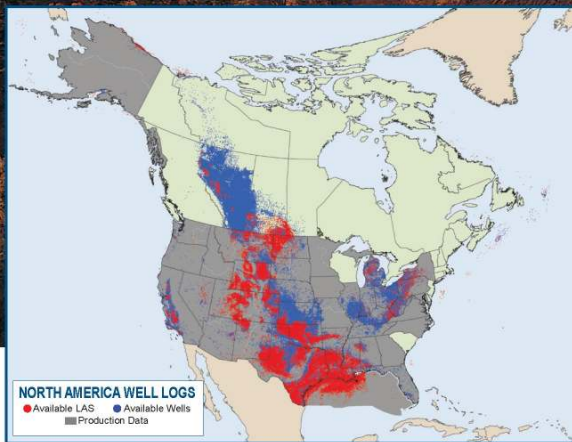
**without reservation .....** \$35.00

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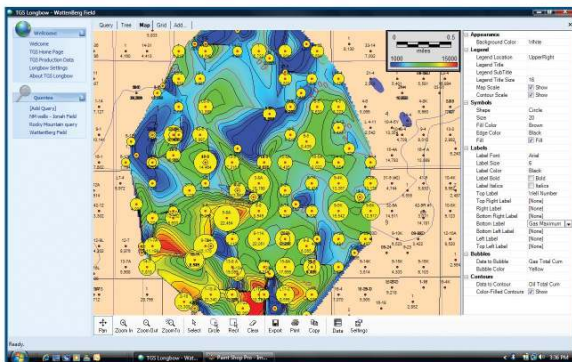
### January 11 - NOGS Luncheon

Guest Speaker H. Leighton Steward, Chairman of Plants Need CO<sup>2</sup> Foundation, will present a talk on "Global Climate Change."

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Correspondence and all luncheon reservations should be sent to the above address.

Sent to press on November 4, 2009.

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## *from the President*

Judging from the feedback, the Kickoff Party was a huge success. Amber and I had fun hosting it. The planning was done by NOGA's Jean Jones and Susie Baker along with NOGS' Entertainment Chairman Dave Reiter. Dave says the NOGA-NOGS Christmas Holiday Party is going to be a gala event. Early reservations would be advisable. Our venue, the newly restored Metairie Country Club, was made available through members Beverly and Carlo Christina. We have an excellent menu planned and music by the Jazzman Trio. Look for details in this LOG.

NOGS President-elect Dave Reiter and I attended the 2nd Annual SPE Delta Section Awards dinner at Benedict's in Mandeville. Other NOGS members at this event included Leslie Broussard with Diversified Well Logging and Dean McPhearson with Baker Hughes. Dean will be moving to Houston and we wish him the best of luck. This is the second year for the Awards Dinner and the dinner guests got a glimpse into the future through the current research going on at Rice University's Richard E. Smalley Institute for Nanoscale Research and Technology. Our speaker was the Institute's Director, Dr. Wade Adams. He provides the vision and direction needed to achieve short- and long-term goals, and promotes the feats of the students and faculty. Dr. Adams came to Rice from the US Air Force as the Chief Scientist of the Materials and Manufacturing Directorate. His background is polymer physics, concentrating on structure-property relations in high-performance organic materials. Over 2002 and 2003, Nobel Prize Laureate Professor Richard E. Smalley developed a list of the Top Ten Problems Facing Humanity over the next 50 Years. The Smalley Institute has identified five of these problems as the "Grand Challenges - energy, water, environment, disease, education." The research of the Smalley Institute uses a variety of nanotechnology approaches to significantly impact these Grand Challenges. You can learn more about the impact on each Grand Challenge through their website (browse "Smalley Institute"). Energy tops the Smalley Problems and a sizable segment of their research is looking into applications to the oil industry. The companies supporting the research are the majors, service companies and large independents. This is the future of our industry-things like formation evaluation using nanoparticles, ultra high-strength tubulars, and tertiary sweeps using nanopolymers.

2009 marks the 75th anniversary of the contemporary Louisiana Geological Survey. Our congratulations to Dr. Chacko J. John, the 11th director who has served in that capacity since 1997. The history of a geological survey in Louisiana dates from 1869 and "morphed"



several times before the contemporary Louisiana Geological Survey in 1934. The LGS ranks include notable names like Russell, Fisk, and Howe. Incidentally, an early Louisiana State geologist was Gilbert D. Harris, a gifted paleontologist who left this post to take over the Geology Department at Cornell and eventually formed the Paleontological Research Institution at Ithica. You can read more about the LGS geologists and their history at the LGS website, and a brief synopsis has been reprinted in the LOG this month.

Mike Fogarty is Chairman of the NOGS External Affairs Committee. His monthly reports to the NOGS Board are packed with information. How to get this before the NOGS members? At first we thought about placing them in the NOGS LOG, but the length and the helpful URLs were a problem. Thanks to Ed Picou and Carlos Crespo (IT guru) you can readily access Mike's reports on policy making, regulations-state and Federal, and AAPG-DPA. The External Affairs button will download Mike's report in MS-Word format, with embedded URLs in blue. Thanks Mike for the continuing service!

Those who made the Kickoff had opportunity to see the Moon, the cloud bands of Jupiter and the Galilean moons through my 3.5" Questar. Winter is upon us and clear crisp evenings bring good skywatching. If you have kids interested in astronomy there is an observatory in Gretna, Louisiana. Veteran astronomer Mike Sandras (formerly Director of the Kenner Planetarium) is on duty to operate a computer controlled 16-inch Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope. This is the largest public telescope in the New Orleans area. It is housed under a traditional aluminum dome. Typical objects of interest in the night sky include our Moon, the planets Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, various nebulae, double stars, star clusters, and constellations. The Gretna Observatory is located at No. 1 Copernicus Lane behind Gretna Jr. High on Gretna Blvd. between Lafayette St. and Manhattan Blvd. Copernicus Lane continues across Gretna Blvd. turning into Huey P. Long Ave. It is open to the public with free admission and parking every Monday and Wednesday evening at dusk except for major holidays and as always weather permitting. On those so-so partly cloudy evenings viewing will be determined by the observatory operator if sky conditions will allow any or limited observing. Visitors may phone ahead at 504-227-7624 to check current sky status and inquire what objects are available for observing.

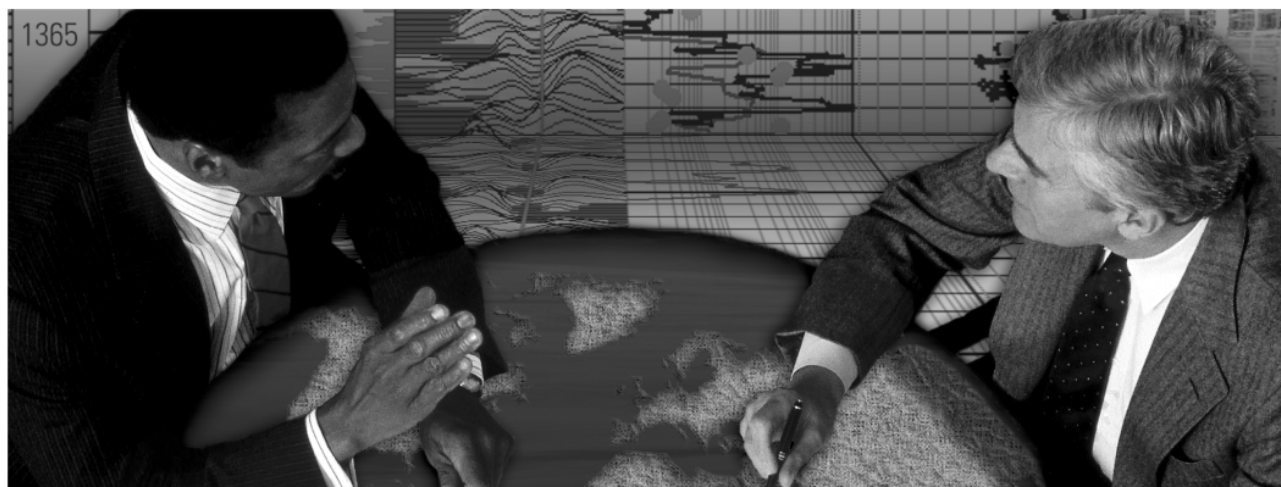
It's easy to get telescope fever-I am afflicted along with several other NOGS members. Recently, I discovered one can

--- continued on page 30 ---

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# December 7 NOGS Luncheon Presentation

\*\*\* at the Holiday Inn Downtown Superdome \*\*\*

## Blue Nile incision, Ethiopian Plateau uplift, and Human Evolution

presented by

**M. Royhan Gani and Nahid DS Gani**

Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of New Orleans

### ABSTRACT

The 1.6-km-deep Gorge of the Nile, a true rival of the Grand Canyon, resulted from the deep incision of the Blue Nile drainage into the uplifted Ethiopian Plateau. We undertook a quantitative geomorphologic approach integrating field, geographic information system, and digital elevation model data to analyze incision history of the Blue Nile drainage. The study is crucial to constrain the uplift history of the Ethiopian Plateau as a way to understand the geodynamics of continental rifting, Cenozoic tectono-climatic change of the region, and the evolution of hominids.

Our data suggests that the Blue Nile drainage experienced episodic increase of long-term incision rates, suggestive of episodic growth of the plateau with ~2 km rock-uplift since ca. 29 Ma. The extremely rapid increase of incision rate of the Blue Nile at ca. 6 Ma suggests a rapid uplift of the plateau in the early Pliocene. The Ethiopian Plateau comprises

the northernmost part of the East African Rift system, the 6000 km long and 600 km wide 'Wall of Africa'. Although the wall started to form around 30 million years ago, various studies show that most of the uplift occurred between 7 and 2 million years ago, just about when hominids split off from African apes, developed bipedalism and evolved bigger brains.

Apart from its narrow and elevated topography, the uniqueness of the Wall of Africa resides in its spatially variable and contrasting physiography with plateaus, volcanoes, mountains, deep rift-valleys, freshwater lakes, and vegetation patchwork ranging from closed woodland to desert grassland. Thus the tectonic creation of the Wall of Africa, a perfect hominid cradle, could have played a major role in forcing hominid evolution the way we are now - walking tall and thinking big - by controlling highly variable physiography and micro- to meso-climate of East Africa.

### BIOGRAPHIES

**M. Royhan Gani and Nahid DS Gani**, are a geologist-couple in academia, received their Ph.D. degrees in Geoscience from the University of Texas at Dallas in 2005 and 2006, respectively. Over the past several years they have investigated the unique and dynamic landscape of East Africa in order to understand the tectonic and climatic history of the region and their critical role in hominid evolution over the past 6 million years. Their research was published on the cover of GSA Today and Geotimes (now Earth), and was covered by numerous media

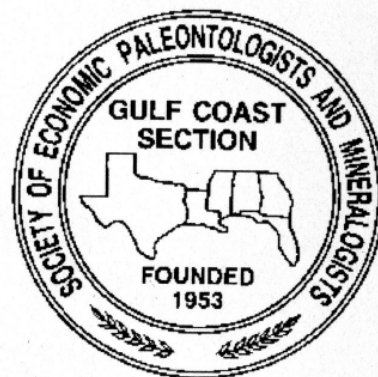
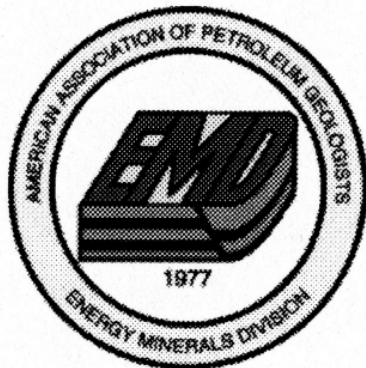
outlets across the globe, including National Public Radio, Discovery Channel, MS-NBC, and New Scientist. In Ethiopia, Nahid conducted fieldwork in some daunting and challenging places previously unexplored by geologists. In August 2008, Royhan and Nahid left University of Utah to join the University of New Orleans (UNO). Currently, Royhan is an Assistant Professor in Earth and Environmental Sciences Department at UNO, and Nahid is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at UNO and Tulane University.

**THE LUNCHEON RESERVATION DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 2 - CONTACT THE NOGS OFFICE**

### “And Looking Ahead...”

The next NOGS Luncheon will be January 11. Guest Speaker H. Leighton Steward, Chairman of Plants Need CO<sup>2</sup> Foundation, will present a talk on “Global Climate Change.” Contact the NOGS office to make your reservation.





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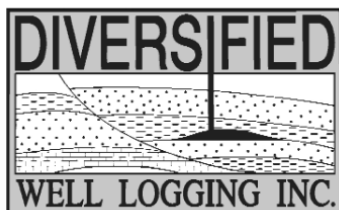
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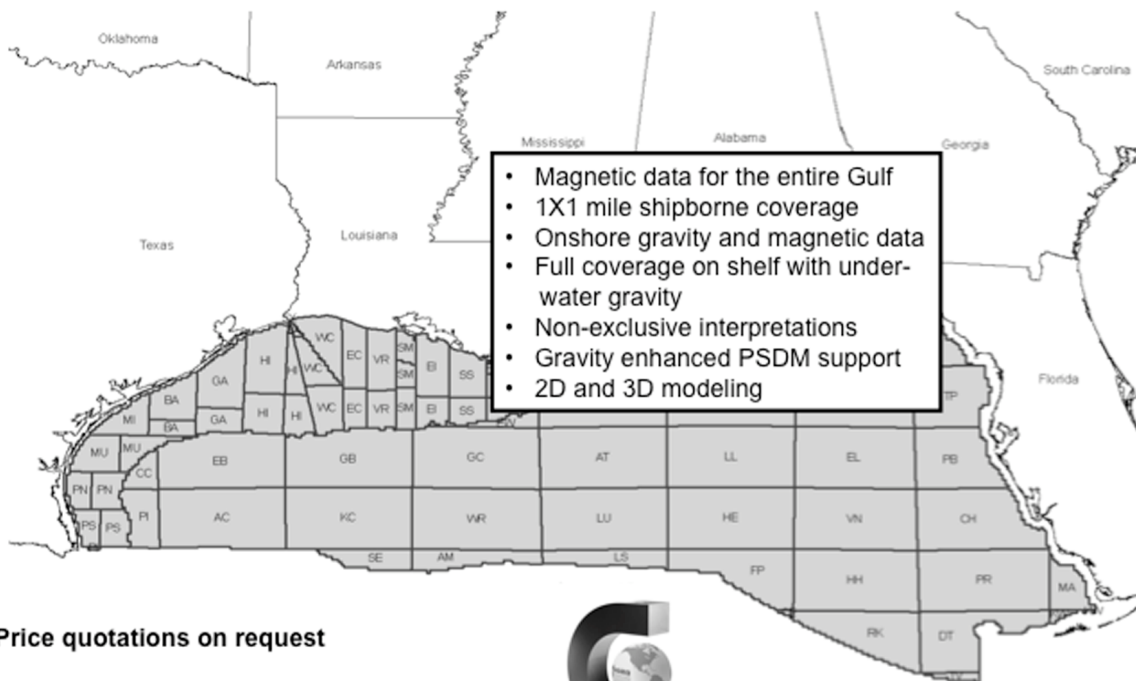




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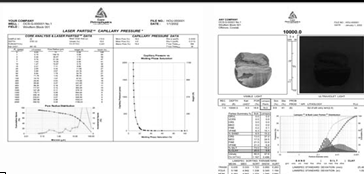


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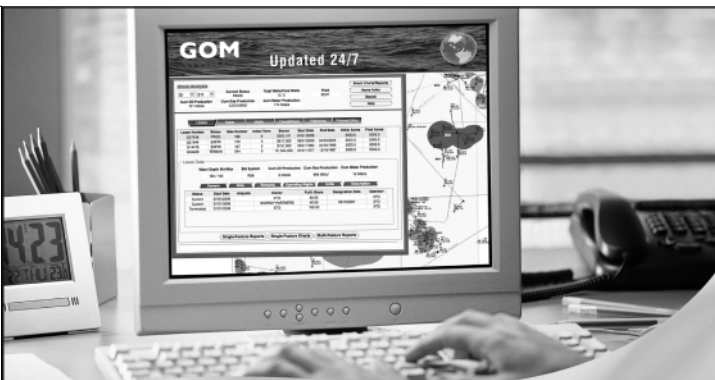


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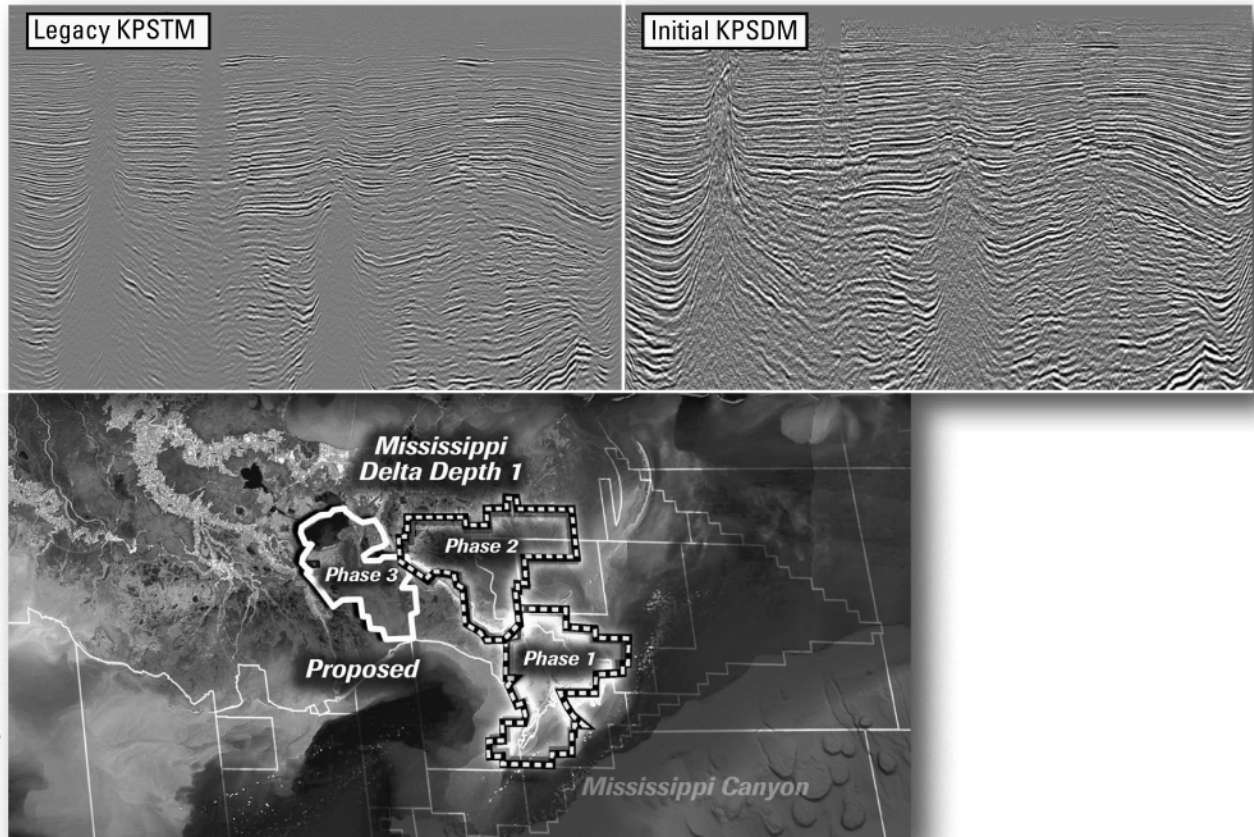
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# NOGA - NOGS Christmas Holiday Party



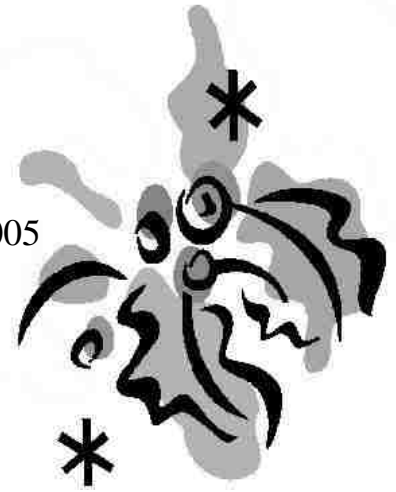
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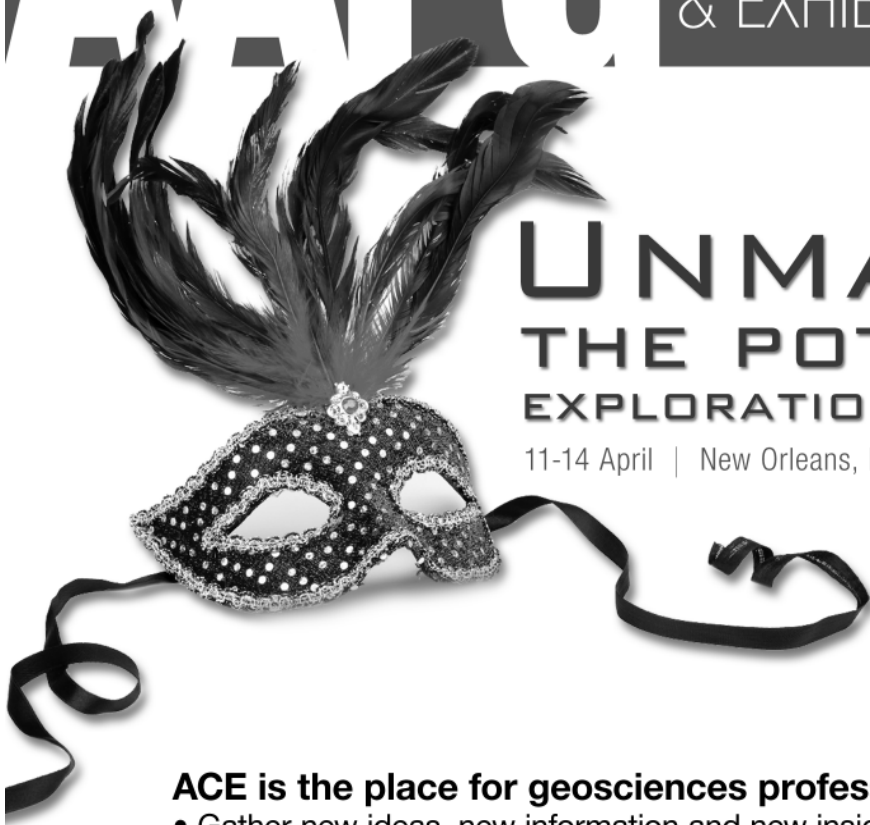
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# The Louisiana Geological Survey a Brief History

Text and images courtesy of Chacko J. John, the LGS website and Edward Picou, Jr.

## Historical Sequence of Organizational Names

Topographical and Geological Survey of Louisiana, 1869-1872; Geological and Agricultural Survey of Louisiana, 1892-1902; Geological Survey of Louisiana, 1903-1909; Louisiana Soil and Geological Survey, 1914-1919; Bureau of Scientific Research, Department of Conservation, 1931-1934; Louisiana Geological Survey, 1934-present

## Historical Sequence of Organizational Directors

Peter V. Hopkins, 1869-1872; Otto Lerch, 1892-1893; William W. Clendenin, 1894-1897; Gilbert D. Harris, 1899-1909; Frederick E. Emerson, 1914-1919; Cyril K. Moresi, 1931-1940; John Huner, Jr., 1940-1946; Paul Montgomery, 1946; James M. Cunningham, 1946-1947; Gerard O. Coignet, 1947; Leo G. Hough, 1947-1977; Harry L. Roland, Jr., 1977-1978; Charles G. Groat, 1978-1990; John E. Johnston III, 1990-1992; William E. Marsalis, 1992-1997; and Chacko J. John, 1997-present

## Organizational History

The Louisiana Geological Survey (LGS) had its beginnings in 1869, four years after the Civil War ended, when the Louisiana Legislature named Francis V. Hopkins, a Louisiana State University (LSU) professor, to be the first State Geologist. His primary assistant was Colonel Charles H. Lockett, head of LSU's Corps of Cadets. They published some of Louisiana's first geologic reports as well as the first topographical and geological maps of the state. In 1873, LSU being without funds, their pioneering work came to an end.

In 1894, LSU Professor William Clendenin was hired to continue Lerch's work. He did so for three years, publishing a number of geological, botanical and agricultural works.

In 1899, LSU hired Gilbert D. Harris of Cornell University to study the geology of the state. Until 1909 he and his assistants published numerous maps and reports. He initiated a tradition of cooperative work with the U.S. Geologic Survey that continues to the present day. Once again, a lack of funds caused the work of Harris and his staff to be discontinued. Harris was a gifted paleontologist who left this post to take over the Geology Department at Cornell. (When he retired, Harris was fearful Cornell would not properly care for his fossils, so he took all of them and created the Paleontological Research Institution in Ithaca, New York. Interestingly, the PRI is now closely associated with Cornell.) In 1913, Frederick E. Emerson came to LSU as a Professor of Geology and head of the new Louisiana Soil and Geological Survey, serving in this capacity from 1913 to 1919. Upon his death in 1919, which left LSU without a single geologist, the Survey was abolished.

In 1931 the Louisiana Legislature created the Bureau of Scientific Research of the Louisiana Department of Conservation. This unit, the immediate precursor of the modern LGS, was charged with the scientific study of the natural resources of the state and with the compilation of the resulting data. Cyril Moresi was named as head of this research unit, and H.V. Howe, head of the LSU School of Geology, assisted him in his tasks.

In 1934, the Louisiana Legislature created the Louisiana Geological Survey, naming Moresi as its first head. Over the next several years, the LGS, headquartered in the Geology Building at LSU, began extensive mapping and research work in Louisiana. The LGS staff included such well-known researchers as Dana Russell, Fred Kniffen, Benjamin Craft, Richard Russell, Harold Fisk, and H.V. Howe.



*The Energy, Coast & Environment Building emphasizes the breadth, scope, and importance of the University's energy, environmental, and coastal programs. Home to the Louisiana Geological Survey, Center for Energy Studies and the School of the Coast & Environment, the state-of-the-art facility features laboratories, research rooms, libraries, faculty offices, and conference rooms. The building's 228-seat auditorium provides a venue for commencement exercises, convocations, cultural events, and scientific meetings. A multipurpose conference room adjacent to the auditorium accommodates workshops, seminars, receptions, and special events.*



In 1940 Moresi was removed from office when LSU was reorganized. He was replaced by John Huner, Jr., who instituted a new system of state districts, each with its own district geologist. Huner left the LGS in 1946; after his departure there was a brief period of administrative uncertainty. His successor, Paul Montgomery, left the LGS eight months later to join the oil industry, and Montgomery's successor, James M. Cunningham, left the LGS to do the same thing seven months after that. Following Cunningham's departure, an LGS cartographer, Gerald Coignet, served as head for three months until some stability could be established.

The rapid succession of administrators led to the appointment in 1947 of the longest-serving head of the LGS, Leo W. Hough, who had been a geologist with the Louisiana Highway Department. From 1947 to 1973, under Hough's leadership, the LGS compiled a great many geologic maps and reports while serving as both the geological research arm of the state and as its geologic oil and gas regulatory arm. In 1973, the oil and gas component of the LGS, complete with its staff, became the Geologic Division of the Louisiana Department of Conservation. In 1977, Hough retired after thirty years of service as the head of the LGS.

Upon Hough's retirement, his assistant Harry L. Roland Jr., perhaps the single most colorful person in the history of the LGS, served as the temporary organizational head for a year while the LGS searched for a new permanent head. During this time the parent organization of the LGS changed from the Louisiana Department of Conservation to the newly created Louisiana Department of Natural Resources.

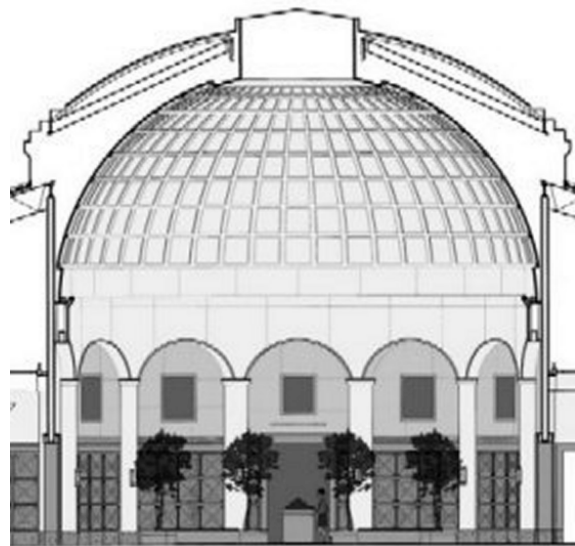
In 1979, Charles G. Groat, who was at that time the Chairman of the Geology Department of the University of Texas at El Paso and who had served as the head of the Texas Bureau of Economic Geology, was hired to lead the LGS. Groat then proceeded to hire a number of geologists from the Bureau and the University of Texas – something that gave the LGS a very distinct Texas flavor throughout the 1980's – as part of his plan to modernize the LGS.

And modernize the LGS did. Under Groat's leadership the LGS expanded dramatically, acquiring new staff as well as modern equipment and technology, and receiving millions of dollars in federal, state, and private grants and contracts. Groat expanded on his role as head of the LGS, serving simultaneously at various times as a junior state cabinet officer and as the head of Louisiana's Coastal Zone Management Division. Under Groat the LGS became involved in virtually every geologic facet of Louisiana and attained national scientific and political recognition. Many new research and regulatory assistance programs were begun; one of these programs, the Coastal Restoration Section of the LGS, has since grown to be a major unit of state government as the Louisiana Coastal Restoration Division. The LGS became a large research organization with offices in several states and with an affiliated research unit at LSU.

In 1990, Groat took a leave of absence from the LGS to serve as director of the American Geological Institute. Groat's assistant (and current LGS Assistant Director) John E. Johnston III served as the acting head of the LGS during the years of his absence. In 1992 Groat formally resigned from the LGS, and William E. Marsalis, the Chief Geologist of the Louisiana Office of Mineral Resources, was named to head the LGS.

In 1997, the LGS was administratively transferred by the Louisiana Legislature from the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources to Louisiana State University, where it had subsequently been housed, and it became a unit of LSU's Office of Graduate Studies and Research. As Marsalis chose to remain with DNR, Chacko J. John, who had previously served as Director of Research for the LGS and was serving as head of LSU's Basin Research Institute (BRI), was named to head the LGS. In 2000, the LGS merged with the BRI, which then became the Basin Research Energy Section of the LGS. The LGS is now housed in the Energy, Coast and Environmental Building at LSU, just south of Tiger Stadium, the home of LSU's Fighting Tigers.

The LGS has provided emergency technical support to the state since the early eighties. When a crisis is imminent, an LGS team is detached from regular duties and reports to the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP). LGS emergency support teams, under the leadership of LGS assistant director John E. Johnston III, have been commended for their emergency, scientific support, mapping, and search and rescue efforts for hurricanes such as Andrew, Katrina, Rita, Gustav, and Ike, and have been credited with saving lives.



*The Energy, Coast & Environment Building's Italian Renaissance-style rotunda and other elements complement the LSU campus architecture.*



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# Imperial Barrel Award

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The Gulf Coast competition will take place in March, with the winning team competing in the finals against teams from throughout the world. The finals will be held during the 2010 AAPG Convention in New Orleans. Among the teams entering the Gulf Coast regional competition are LSU, UNO, and Alabama.

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- Mentors to make presentations at one or more schools on topics such as basin analysis, subsurface mapping, prospect economics, etc.
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If you would like to help or want additional information, contact Art Johnson (artjohnson51@hotmail.com).

## INFO TIDBITS

- Sea level studies have determined that rates of sea level rise are accelerating in North Carolina. University of Pennsylvania researchers noted sea-level rise to be three times higher in the 20th century than the rate of sea-level rise during the last 500 years. For more information, visit: <http://www.upenn.edu/pennnews/article.php?id=1748>
- Production has begun from W&T Offshore's Daniel Boone Field. The discovery well currently has a gross daily production of 6,000 barrels of oil and 5,700 thousand cubic feet of natural gas per day. The field lies in water depths of approximately 4,230 feet and is about 120 miles from the Louisiana coast.
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### **HOW TO SUBMIT:**

Abstracts (not more than 250 words) should be submitted for review online or via email to the technical program chair. Papers should have application to Gulf Coast and Gulf of Mexico geology. Include your full mailing address, telephone and FAX numbers, email address, and whether you are submitting for **oral** or **poster** or **either** (preferred).

**Submit abstracts by February 1, 2010 as instructed on the website [www.gcags2010.com](http://www.gcags2010.com)**

Notification of acceptance by March 1, 2010. All presenters, both oral or poster, must submit either a paper (10-12 pages) or an extended abstract with key figures for review by **April 16, 2010**, for inclusion in the *Transactions*. Full instructions for authors will be posted at [www.gcags2010.com](http://www.gcags2010.com).

### **ABSTRACT DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 1, 2010!**

Questions or ideas for the technical program should be directed to:

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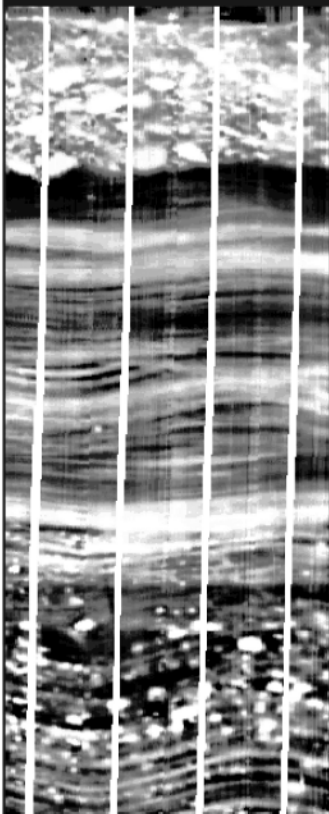


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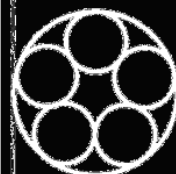
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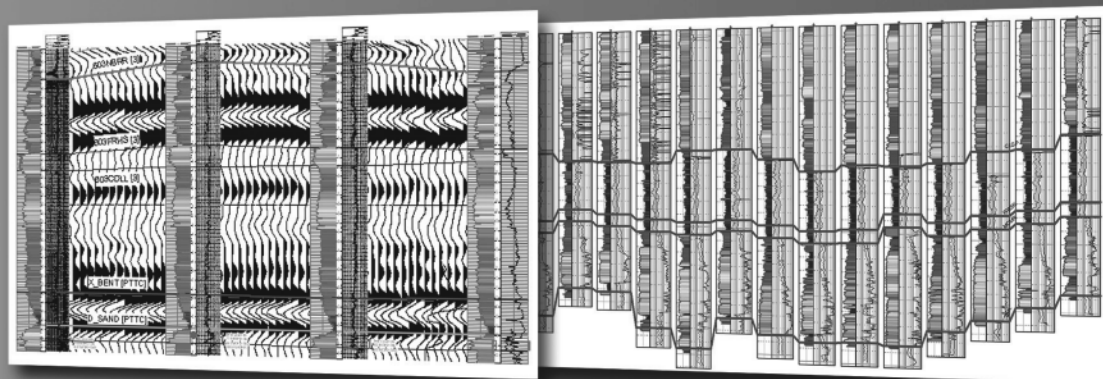


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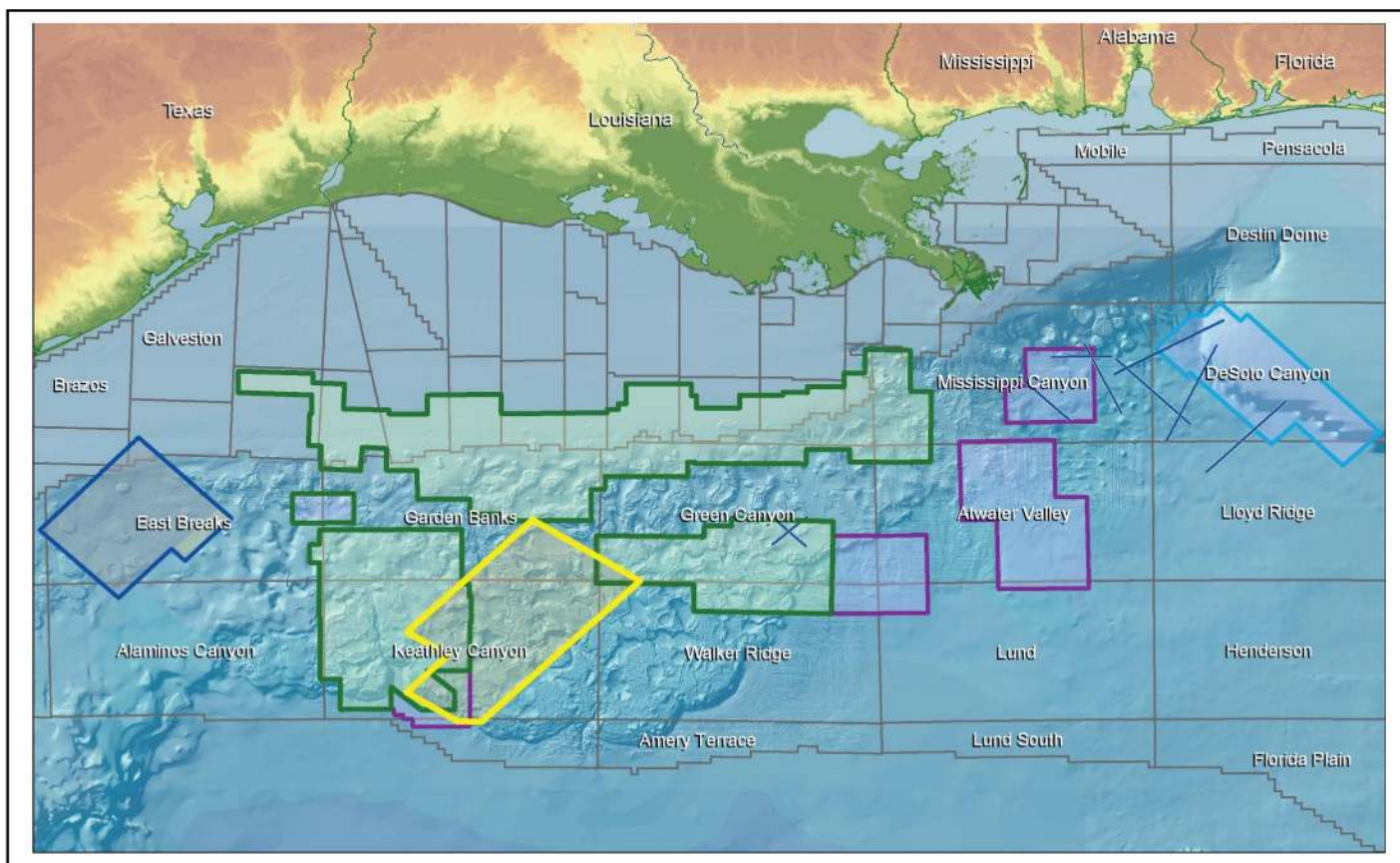
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