

# NOGS LOG

NOVEMBER 2015

Volume 56, Number 5



## NOVEMBER 2 - NOGS LUNCHEON

Presentation: When Earth Attacks! A Geologist's Retrospective

Guest Speaker: Mr. Mike Merritt

GEM Consulting, Ltd. • Baton Rouge, Louisiana



SOCIETY FOR EARTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES PRESENTS

# THE 41<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL MINERAL AUCTION



FRIDAY  
NOVEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup>  
7PM- TILL

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FIRST FLOOR

MINERALS, FOSSILS, JEWELRY, AND MUCH MORE!



Published monthly by the New Orleans Geological Society.  
This issue was sent to press on October 19, 2015.

**Interested in contributing to the NOGS LOG?** Please submit items by the 1st Friday of the month to [nogseditor@gmail.com](mailto:nogseditor@gmail.com). Advertising requests should contact the NOGS office at [info@nogs.org](mailto:info@nogs.org).

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## ON THE COVER

### Cover Photo Submitted by Cyril Lobo

#### Devils Tower — Wyoming

Devils Tower in northeastern Wyoming was first declared a US National Monument by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906. It is an igneous intrusive rock of Tertiary age (~ 50my) classified as phonolite porphyry. Vertical joints fracture the rock mass into polygonal columns during cooling. Erosion of Triassic-Jurassic sedimentary rocks left behind the Tower which rises 867 feet from its base. The top area is 1.5 acres and the base has a diameter of 1000 feet.

## From the Editor



Horace Walpole coined serendipity meaning a “fortunate happenstance,” in 1754. In a letter he wrote to a friend, Walpole explained an unexpected discovery he had made by reference to a Persian fairy tale, *The Three Princes of Serendip*. The princes kept making discoveries, by accident, of things which they were not in quest of, which brings me to my story. UNO graduate student, Rachel Carter presented her poster, “Dynamic Interplay Between Channel Evolution and Seafloor Topography Linked to Rising Salt Domes, Horn Mountain, Mississippi Canyon, Gulf of Mexico,” at the 2015 Deepwater Technical Symposium. I had seen some of her research at the Denver AAPG and availed another look at the DWTs. One thing that stood out

this time was the controversial braided channels in between salt domes. “This needs more documenting,” she explained. A couple weeks later I was looking over the August *Nature Geoscience* and there it was: “Braiding of submarine channels controlled by aspect ratio similar to rivers” by Brady Foreman, et al. I fired off my serendipitous discovery to Rachel who said that this was just the article she needed. By taking the time to look at academic poster talks, we engage and learn about their science and perhaps can help out in some small way, suggest colleagues, and glean new information for your own work or research.

A note from the GCAGS 2015: I made connections with students at the GCAGS and have followed up on connecting them with colleagues who can aid them in their research. Students with business cards are useful and professional.

*Tom*  
Tom Klekamp, Editor

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## *From the President*

Many years ago when I first started attending NOGS luncheon meetings, I remarked to another older long-time NOGS member that I thought NOGS seemed to be a really nice “club.” He immediately admonished me by saying, “Oh no, NOGS is not a “club.” It’s a true society of professional geologists who come together once a month to socialize with fellow geologists and perhaps trade a few ideas about latest concepts of petroleum geology.” Since then, I have come to view the luncheons as much more than just a monthly technical presentation. Meeting and greeting industry colleagues, plying each other for the latest news or gossip, and commiserating about the present state of affairs in the petroleum industry is a truly enjoyable way to spend an hour or so once a month. Of course, the luncheon technical presentation is an important part of the monthly NOGS meeting. Often, when I ask fellow colleagues whether they are planning on attending the next NOGS luncheon, they immediately inquire about the topic of the technical presentation. Many times they refuse to go if the subject matter is not directly related to their present work scope. Frankly, I enjoy listening to any geologically related presentation regardless of topic or whether it’s related to my current work assignments. I enjoy finding out how the presenter approached a problem, how he presents his ideas in new and unique ways, and whether he uses innovative techniques in his analysis that may be useful in my current work projects. It may only take one of these new ideas to help sell a big prospect or discover the next multimillion barrel oil field. So, the next time someone asks if you are going to this month’s NOGS luncheon, don’t even think about whether the technical presentation topic seem directly related to you. Just say, “You bet I’m coming!” See you at the next meeting.

Last month’s NOGS Fall Kickoff Party at Rock-'N-Bowl was another rousing social event. A total of 63 people enjoyed the comradery of fellow NOGS members and their guests while noshing on finger foods and watching the large contingent of student partygoers show the older members the fine art of bowling. We even picked up a few new NOGS members along the way. Our next big social event is the annual Christmas Holiday Party to be held this year at the lakefront home of Ed Picou on Saturday, December 19. Make sure you put this on your holiday social calendar and look for more information in this and the next issue of the *NOGS LOG*. And finally, our next NOGS Luncheon will be held on Monday, November 2. Mr. Mike Merritt with GEM Consulting, Ltd., will present what I’m sure will be a thought provoking talk entitled “When Earth Attacks! A Geologist’s Retrospective.” Make your reservation early for this meeting online at [www.nogs.org](http://www.nogs.org) or by calling the NOGS office at 504-561-8980.

Have a safe and scary Hallowe’en.

**David Reiter**

**NOGS Office**

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The office is located at 810 Union Street, Suite 300, New Orleans, LA 70112.

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

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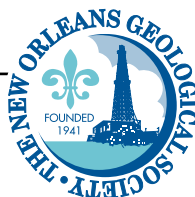
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## November 2 • NOGS Luncheon

Holiday Inn Downtown Superdome

\$3.00 validated parking in hotel garage

### Presentation:

***When Earth Attacks! A Geologist's Retrospective***

### Guest Speaker:

**Mike Merritt**

President and Principal Geologist • GEM Consulting, Ltd. • Baton Rouge, Louisiana

See pages 8 and 9 for Abstract and Biography

### HOLIDAY INN DOWNTOWN SUPERDOME

Check with concierge or  
front desk for location.

Lunch served at 11:30 am

### ADMISSION:

With reservation..... \$30.00

Without reservation ..... \$35.00

Student Member with reservations..... FREE

### November 10

18th Annual Greater New Orleans Joint Industry Assoc. Luncheon

Keynote Speaker: Eric Smith, Tulane Energy Institute

11 am - 1 pm • Roosevelt Hotel • New Orleans, LA

\$45 Advance Registration, \$50 at Door • (SIPES New Orleans Chapter members are prepaid)

### December 13-16

2015 34th Annual GCSSEPM Foundation Perkins-Rose Research Conference

Production Systems in "Rift" Basins

OMNI Houston Westside • Houston, TX

For more information, [http://www.gcssepm.org/conference/2015\\_conference.htm](http://www.gcssepm.org/conference/2015_conference.htm)

### December 19

NOGS Christmas Holiday Party

Home of Ed Picou • 232 Lake Marina Ave. Apt. 14C • New Orleans, LA

Save the Date! See page 18 in this *NOGS LOG*.

### February 9-12 (2016)

NAPE Summit

George Brown Convention Center • Houston, Texas

For more information, <http://napeexpo.com/shows/about-the-show/summit>

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*Continued from previous page*

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2017(a)	G. Alex Janevski
2018	Art Johnson
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## Nov. 2 NOGS Luncheon Presentation

☆☆☆ at the Holiday Inn Superdome ☆☆☆

# WHEN EARTH ATTACKS!

*Presented by*

**Michael Merritt**

**President and Principal Geologist**

**GEM Consulting, Ltd.**

**Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

# A GEOLOGIST'S RETROSPECTIVE

## ABSTRACT

In the 16th Century, a European scholar keenly observed rivers and marshes. He understood and described the balanced processes of erosion and deposition. In the U.S. during the 19th century, industrial development disturbed this geological balancing act by seeking to control the Mississippi River to serve commerce. NOGS members know all too well how efforts to control floods along the Mississippi River in the 20th century hobbled depositional processes and starved marshes of sediment, inevitably leaving the coastal marshes to drown in the 21st century.

However, this legacy of unanticipated consequences, due to collateral disruptions of coastal geology processes, did not cause the full measure of misery Hurricanes Katrina and Rita provided. Instead, these 2005 catastrophes surged on a perfect storm of federal government errors and omissions such as:

- 1) Failing to use modern geology and geophysics methods to prepare thorough, sufficiently detailed, physical geology studies of levee foundations.
- 2) Omitting to invest enough money to construct a flood protection system that would save lives and instead, building a "lower price tag" project to meet a lesser storm threat and planning to mitigate inevitable property damage (caused by major storms) with a federal flood insurance program.
- 3) Producing flood defenses that could not perform up to design specifications or capacities.



This talk will raise geological issues illustrated by my experiences and observations over the last ten years as I shared my expertise as a geologist with other public policy makers working to repair, operate and maintain our flood defenses. Our challenge now, is to use our most up to date geological methods and geophysical tools to do detailed scientific work to find and strengthen unhealthy levee reach foundations being undermined by any undetected geological hazards.

## BIOGRAPHY



**Mike Merritt** worked his way through graduate school in petroleum geology at the University of Oklahoma by drafting South Louisiana oil and gas drilling prospects and working as a “jug hustler” acquiring and recording seismic data. Merritt’s M.S. thesis is published as part of the Oklahoma Geological Survey Bulletin 142, Geology and Mineral Resources of Marshall County, Oklahoma.

As a development projects geologist, for Sun Oil, he worked infill drill sites and tertiary recovery projects in Louisiana and the southeast U.S.

As an exploration projects geologist for Conoco, he participated in seismic group shoots, interpreted vibroseis data and proposed wildcat drill sites in southern Oklahoma. He was picked to guide Conoco’s proprietary computer geology mapping program. He is retired from public service for the State of Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC) where he regulated the oil and gas industry and guided a work group that received a governor’s commendation. The OCC also received national acclaim for environmental protection programs while Merritt served as his department’s first full time environmental investigator.

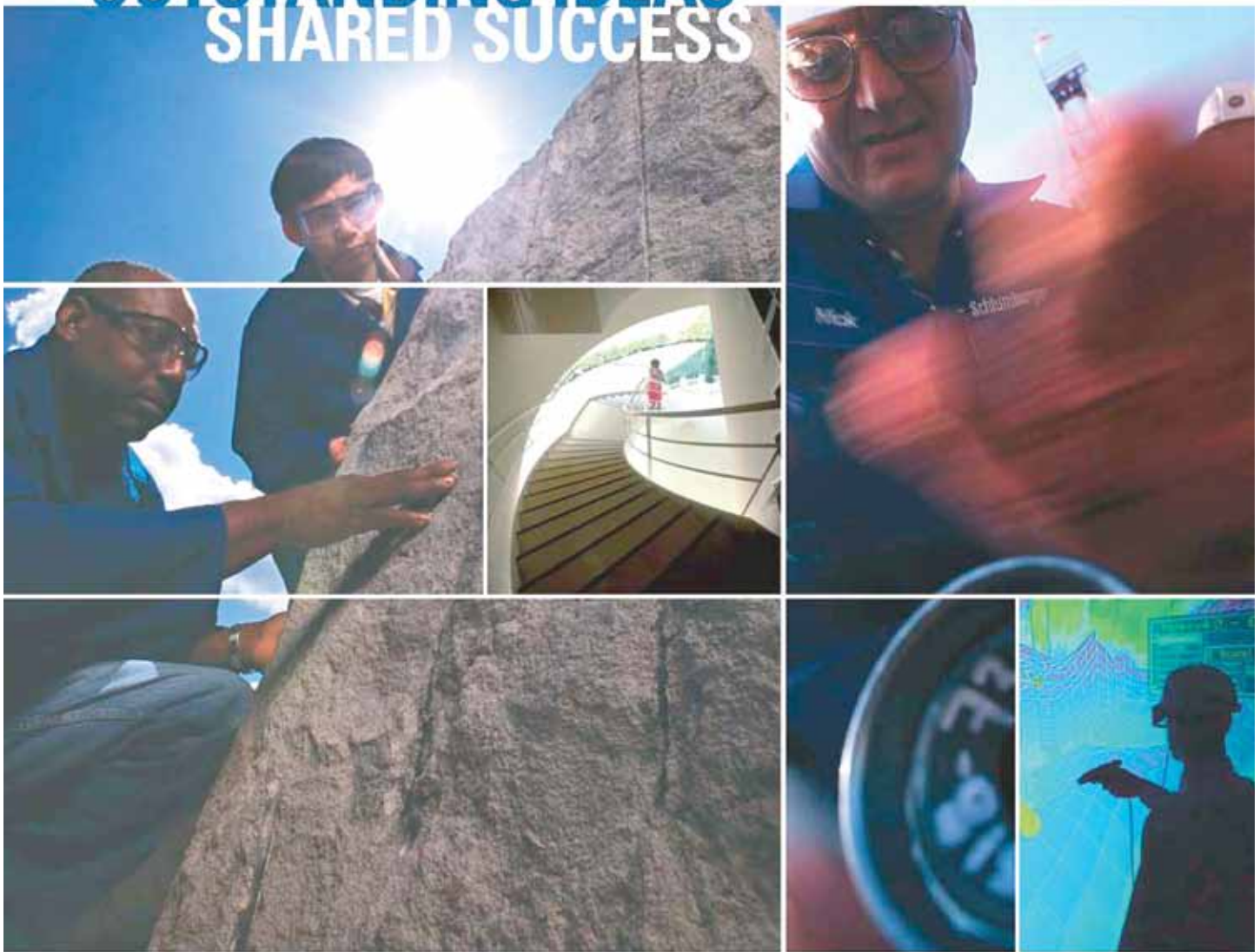
As a principal geologist for Halliburton, he was working abroad to double production in a giant oil and gas field before coming back to Louisiana in 2004, and establishing GEM Consulting LTD, a Baton Rouge geology consulting practice. As part of the levee district reform effort after hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Merritt was the first geologist, among seven commissioners, appointed by Governor Blanco to take charge of West Bank hurricane defenses. Also with Senate confirmations, Governor Jindal twice reappointed him a commissioner. Mike Merritt is a NOGS member and has spoken previously to our luncheon meetings about levee geotechnical issues.

**THE LUNCHEON RESERVATION DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 30 - CONTACT THE NOGS OFFICE**

### ***"And Looking Ahead . . ."***

*The next luncheon will be held on December 7. Our guest speaker, Jim Hill, CalTerra Energy, will present "The Status of Unconventional Exploration in Europe." Contact the NOGS office at 504-561-8980 or use the PayPal link on the NOGS website ([www.nogs.org](http://www.nogs.org)) to make your reservation.*

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS: NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2015

2015	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT / INFO
2 Nov	<b>NOGS Monthly Luncheon</b> <b>Mike Merrit, GEM Consulting, Ltd.</b> <i>"When Earth Attacks! A Geologist's Retrospective"</i>	Holiday Inn SuperDome	annette@nogs.org or 504-561-8980
6 Nov	Mineral Auction at UNO - 7-10 PM	UNO Geology Dept.	
6 Nov	NOGS LOG submissions due for December issue		nogseditor@gmail.com or 985-630-2480
10 Nov	18th Annual Joint Energy Industry Assoc. Luncheon Eric Smith, Professor, Tulane University and Associate Director, Tulane Energy Institute	Roosevelt Hotel New Orleans	<a href="http://www.api-delta.org/media/31841/2014_joint_luncheon_flyer.pdf">http://www.api-delta.org/media/31841/2014_joint_luncheon_flyer.pdf</a>
12 Nov	SGS Meeting	Holiday Inn SuperDome	
16 Nov	NOGS Board Meeting	NOGS Office	annette@nogs.org or 504-561-8980
17 Nov	SIPES Meeting	Andrea's	Reservations: Carol St. Germaine 504-267-3466
19 Nov	SPWLA	Holiday Inn SuperDome	
4 Dec	NOGS LOG submissions due for January 2016 issue		nogseditor@gmail.com or 985-630-2480
7 Dec	<b>NOGS Monthly Luncheon</b> <b>Jim Hill, President CalTerra Energy</b> <i>"The Status of Unconventional Exploration in Europe"</i>	Holiday Inn SuperDome	annette@nogs.org or 504-561-8980
10 Dec	SGS Meeting	Holiday Inn SuperDome	
13-16 Dec	34th Annual GCSSEPM Perkins-Rosen Research Conf. <i>"Petroleum Systems in "Rift" Basins"</i>	OMNI Houston Westside, Houston, Texas	<a href="http://www.gcssepm.org/conference/2015_conference.htm">http://www.gcssepm.org/conference/2015_conference.htm</a>
14 Dec	NOGS Board Meeting	NOGS Office	annette@nogs.org or 504-561-8980
15 Dec	SIPES Luncheon (Open Mike)	Andrea's Metairie	Reservations: Carol St. Germaine 504-267-3466
14-18 Dec	American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting	San Francisco	<a href="http://fallmeeting.agu.org/2015/">http://fallmeeting.agu.org/2015/</a>
17 Dec	SPWLA	Holiday Inn SuperDome	
19 Dec	<b>NOGS Christmas Holiday Party</b>	Home of Ed Picou	annette@nogs.org or 504-561-8980





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# New Orleans Geological Auxiliary News

*"The objective of the Auxiliary is to promote fellowship among the wives of the members of the New Orleans Geological Society and to render assistance to NOGS upon request."*

Never let it be said that the NOGA ladies let natural disasters, flooded streets, hail and high water, melting mile-high pies or unavailable speakers stop their good times. Why would the current "every street in town"



*September luncheon committee  
Mary Walther and Camille Yeldell*

being reconstructed with giant trucks either digging up, laying huge drainage pipes or cement trucks on the way to put in new curbs disturb our eager and valiant ladies from a lovely day and lunch at the home of Camille Yeldell? (Camille was unable to be installed as NOGA president in 1978 because of the May 8th flood and held the record of our only uninstalled president until our current president missed her installation due to a medical emergency.) The sun shone brightly, the street in front of Camille's was clear and 22 ladies enjoyed a wonderful lunch and a lot of visiting. Camille and Mary Walther chaired the event. The delicious lunch was catered by Peggy Fisk. Camille baked a variety of desserts. Everyone was obviously obligated to try them all. The very next day, Camille reported lines of cement trucks stacked up in front of her house, so it looks like the Auxiliary luck is still holding.

The Auxiliary is very happy to welcome new member Genny Melillo, who was excited to renew her acquaintance with long time friend Dorothy Jean Hill. Genny is the wife of NOGS President-Elect Al Melillo.

The next event will be a luncheon at the Southern Yacht Club, November 11th. Alma Dunlap and Pat Williamson are the committee. Come and enjoy a spectacular view and a special lunch. Guests are welcome.

NOGS Christmas Holiday Party at the beautiful home of Ed Picou which overlooks the yacht harbor on Lake Pontchartrain. The Auxiliary will be lending a helping hand for this celebration. Peggy Fisk, whose catering was so delicious at the September luncheon, will provide the food for this event.

New NOGA members will be very welcome and can enjoy many planned events for the coming year. Please use the application found below.

December 19th  
will be the festive



*New member Genny Milillo and Dorothy Jean Hill*

**Peggy Rogers, NOGS LOG**

## New Orleans Geological Auxiliary Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Spouse's Company \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Dues: \$25 payable to New Orleans Geological Auxiliary**  
**Please mail to Judy Lemarié, Treasurer, #2 Yosemite Dr., New Orleans, LA 70131**



# 18TH ANNUAL GREATER NEW ORLEANS JOINT INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION LUNCHEON

**Tuesday, November 10, 2015**

**11:00 am - 1:00 pm**



**Key Note Speaker: Eric Smith**

*Professor, Tulane University*

*Associate Director, Tulane Energy Institute*

## **Roosevelt Hotel**

Roosevelt Ballroom Salon

123 Baronne St. New Orleans, LA

\$45 in advance | \$50 at the door

**Eric Smith** currently is a Professor of Practice at the A.B. Freeman School of Business at Tulane University. He also serves as the Associate Director of the Tulane Energy Institute. He joined Tulane in 2003. In addition, he is the Energy committee co-chairman of the World Trade Center of New Orleans and acts as Tulane's media spokesman for energy issues. He recently authored a report that deals with the positive economic impact of the US shale initiative on the Louisiana economy.

Eric is a 1965 Chemical Engineering graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology and earned an MBA, in 1967, from the A. B. Freeman School at Tulane University. In addition to twelve years of full time academic/advisory experience, he has nineteen years of experience in the international offshore drilling and construction sectors with positions including EVP at Torch, Inc., President and Chairman of Saipem, Inc. and, preceding Saipem, ten years at J. Ray McDermott. Prior to his roles in offshore drilling and construction, he was involved in downstream petrochemicals, first with Allied Chemical and subsequently with the Ethyl Corporation.

For more information contact: Barney Paternostro | [BarneyP@llog.com](mailto:BarneyP@llog.com)

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One ticket and listing in program.







# **NOGS**

# **Christmas Holiday Party**

**Saturday, December 19, 2015**

**7:00-10:00 pm**

**At the home of Ed Picou  
in the Marseilles Condominiums  
232 Lake Marina Ave., Apt. 14C  
Across from the New Orleans Yacht Harbor**

**Please Note: Do not park in the Yacht Harbor area.  
There is an open lot adjacent to the Marseilles  
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**Open Bar**

**Buffet Dinner**

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**Buffet Dinner & Open Bar**

**Members \$35 • Students \$25**

**Reservations must be made by  
Thursday, December 10, 2015**





# Petroleum Systems in "Rift" Basins

34th Annual GCSSEPM Foundation Bob F. Perkins Research Conference

Date: December 13–16, 2015

Location: Omni Houston Hotel at Westside  
Houston, TX

Abstracts @ [http://www.gcssepm.org/conference/2015\\_abstracts4.pdf](http://www.gcssepm.org/conference/2015_abstracts4.pdf)

Presentations & Papers Addressing:

- Regional Aspects of Rift Petroleum Systems & Prospectivity
- South Atlantic Rifts
- African Rifts
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- European Rifts
- Asian Rifts

## Conference Registration OPEN

@ [http://www.gcssepm.org/conference/2015\\_conference.htm](http://www.gcssepm.org/conference/2015_conference.htm)



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# South Louisiana and Offshore Gulf of Mexico Exploration and Production Activities

LAFAYETTE DISTRICT, ONSHORE AREA

By Carlo C. Christina

*During the month of August only 16 permits to drill were issued by the Office of Conservation, Lafayette District, Onshore Area. Of these 16 permits only 8 were for new wells, 4 were for observation sulphur wells, 3 were for salt water disposal wells and 1 was for an observation well. Following are the most significant locations and completions:*

## NEW LOCATIONS

Hilcorp Energy will drill an interesting well in **Chalkley Field**, (A), Cameron Parrish. The #13 Sweet Lake Land will be drilled to test Camerina sands in Sec. 14, 12S-7W at a depth of 13,500 feet. This well is interesting because it is offsetting several wells producing from deep **Miogyp sands** at depths of 14,000 feet to 16,000 feet. Camerina production cannot be confirmed in any offsetting wells and it is assumed that the well will be drilled to evaluate a seismic anomaly. (249320)

Chalkley Field is an old field, discovered in 1938, now with more than 224 wells drilled in the field. More than 125 wells were drilled to 10,000 feet or less. In 1989 Exxon drilled a deep test, the #1 Sweet Lake Land, approximately 1½ miles southwest of the field and discovered major reserves in the Miogyp sands below 14,000 feet. The well encountered **485 net feet of gas** in the interval 14,100 feet to 14,900 feet, with additional pay between 15,100 feet and 15,400 feet. The well produced more than 45 million cubic feet of gas and 740 barrels of condensate per day. Four development wells were drilled and completed within the following 3 years indicating one of the largest gas discoveries onshore at that time. In 1993, with 4 wells producing from the Miogyp section, production peaked in the field at 78.2 billion cubic feet of gas, ranking it as the largest gas producing in South Louisiana, Onshore.

In Jefferson Parish, Hilcorp Energy will drill its #1 SL 21495 in **Saturday Island Field**, (B), Jefferson Parish, in Sec. 12, 19S-24E. It will be drilled to a depth of 13,070 feet, located 2 miles northwest of nearest production in the field. It is also located offsetting an abandoned gas well, drilled by LL&E as the #1 LL& E fee. It was completed in 1999 as the discovery well for Saturday Island Field, and produced from 3 zones between 11,800 feet and 12,400 feet. (249333)

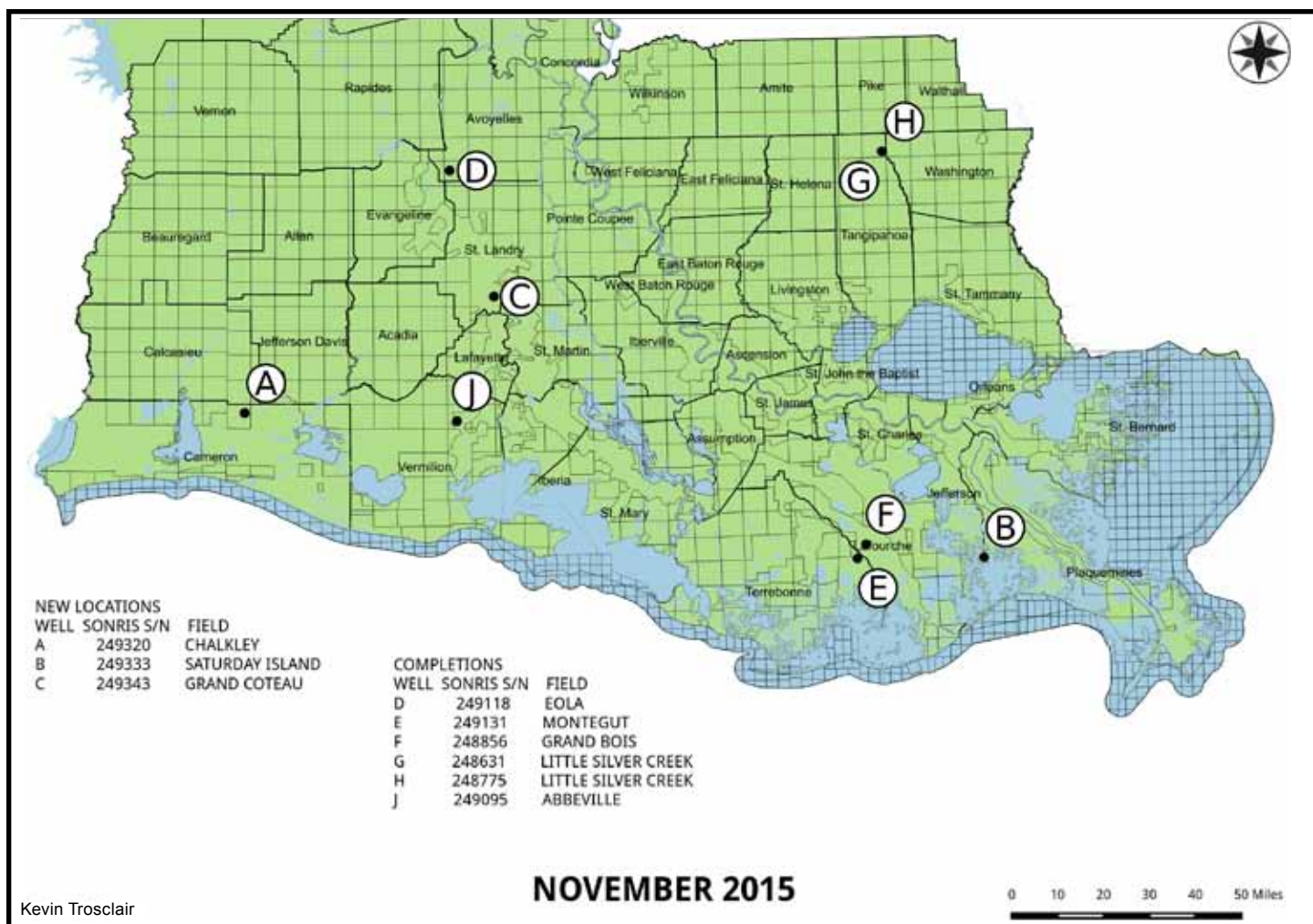
Caskids Operating Company has permitted the #1 Barry in Sec. 141, 7S-4E in **Grand Coteau Field**, (C), St Landry Parish. It is located 1 mile northeast of abandoned production in the field and will be drilled to 10,320 feet. (249343)

## COMPLETIONS

Petro-Guard Production has completed an excellent oil well in **Eola Field**, (D), Avoyelles Parish, flowing 180 BOPD and 131 MCFD. The #1 Eola was drilled 1 mile southeast of production and completed in a Wilcox sand through perforations 8575 to 8590 feet. It was drilled in Sec. 17, 2S-3E to a total depth of 9010 feet. (249118)

In **Montegut Field**, (E), Terrebonne Parish, BTA Producers has plugged and abandoned the #1 ExxonMobil at a depth of 14,504 feet. The well was drilled 1 mile south of production in Sec. 17, 19S-19E. (249131)





Knight Resources has plugged and abandoned the #1 ALM in **Grand Bois Field**, (F), Lafourche Parish. The well was drilled to a total depth of 17,432 feet in Sec. 19, 18S-20E seeking Cris I sands. (248856)

In Tangipahoa Parish, **Little Silver Creek Field**, (G), Goodrich Petroleum has completed the #1 NEZ 43 H in the **Tuscaloosa Marine Shale** flowing **879 BOPD** and **40 MCF** through perforations 11,960 to 18,452, overall. The well was drilled to total depth of 18,548 feet in Sec. 43, 1S-8E, with the bottom hole located in Sec. 39. (248631)

Goodrich Petroleum has completed **another Tuscaloosa Marine Shale well**, also in **Little Silver Creek Field**, (H), Tangipahoa Parish. The #2 NEZ 43 H was drilled to total depth of 18,335 feet in Sec. 43, 1S-8E, with the bottom hole located in Sec. 5. It was completed **flowing 843 BOPD and 104 MCF** through perforations 12,264 to 18,191 feet, overall. (248775)

In Vermilion Parish, **Abbeville Field**, (J), LKO Operating has completed an oil well flowing 123 BOPD and 100 MCF through perforations 11,286 feet to 11,300 feet. The well was drilled to a total depth of 11,366 feet in Sec. 67, 12S-3E. (249095)

## OFFSHORE GULF OF MEXICO SHELF AND DEEPWATER ACTIVITIES

*by Al Baker*

During **September 2015**, the BOEM approved **68** Gulf of Mexico drilling permits. Of these, **11** were for shelf wells, and **57** were for deepwater wells. Of the total number of permits, there were **5 new well permits** issued, **all** in deepwater.

The five new well permits were for deepwater exploration wells. These permits were awarded to **Freeport McMoRan Oil & Gas** for their **Mississippi Canyon 84 #SS-6** well, to **LLOG Exploration Offshore** for their **Mississippi Canyon 427 #2** well, to **Anadarko Petroleum** for their **Green Canyon 726 #2** well, to **Chevron** for their **Keathley Canyon 96 #1** well and to **Repsol E&P USA** for their **Keathley Canyon 686 #2** well.

Over the past nine months, there have been **8** new wells permitted on the Gulf of Mexico **shelf**, whereas there have been **50** new well permits issued in **deepwater**.

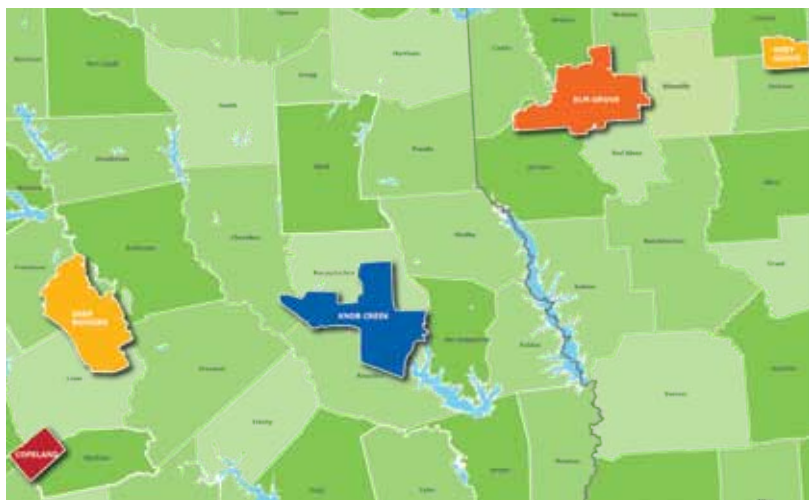
On September 25th, **IHS-Petrodata** reported that the Gulf of Mexico mobile offshore rig supply stood at **118**, which is **2** more rigs than last month. The marketed rig supply consisted of **75** rigs, of which **54** were under contract. The contracted versus total rig supply utilization rate is **45.8%**, while the marketed contracted versus marketed supply utilization rate stands at **72.0%**. The marketed rig supply number is **1** less than reported last month, and the contracted rig supply number is **2** less than reported last month. In contrast, the September 2014 fleet utilization rate stood at 66.4% with 77 out of the 116 rigs under contract.

On September 25th, **BakerHughes** indicated that there were **33** active mobile offshore rigs in the Gulf, which is **61.1%** of the rigs under contract mentioned above. This active rigs number is **3** more than reported last month. The current active rigs count compares to 62 active rigs during the same period last year, representing a **53.2%** decline in yearly rig activity.

On September 9th, the **BOEM** announced that it had accepted a total of **6** bids in the **Phase 1** evaluation period of **OCS Sale 246**, which was held in the **Western Gulf of Mexico** planning area on August 19, 2015. As of September 18th, an additional **7** bids have been deemed acceptable during the **Phase 2** evaluation period leaving **20** bids pending approval by the BOEM. The BOEM has 90 days following the date of the lease sale to either accept or reject the bids received.

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## UNO Imperial Barrel Team Wins Regional, Advanced to International Finals

A team of University of New Orleans graduate students won the 2015 Gulf Coast Regional Imperial Barrel Award in Houston, Texas and advanced to the international finals in Denver, Colo. The Imperial Barrel program, which is organized by the AAPG, pits geosciences teams from universities around the world against each other in a competition to analyze an oil and gas reservoir.

UNO's team beat out 10 regional competitors during the April 16-17 event from universities including Auburn, University of Alabama, Texas A&M, University of Texas at Austin, University of Houston and LSU.

The team members are John Norbert Kramer, Elijah Ayobami Adedeji, Joshua Flathers, Joseph Paul Frank and Christopher M. Johnson. The faculty adviser is Royhan Gani, associate professor of earth and environmental science, and team is assisted by Toby Roesler of Stone Energy and adjunct faculty member Michael Fitzgerald. The \$3,000 prize will go toward scholarships in UNO's Department of Earth and Environmental Science.

"Winning this high profile competition brings fantastic exposure to the University of New Orleans," Gani said. "For both prospective students and industry recruiters, this shows that UNO has one of the top geoscience programs in the region."

In the regional, teams analyze a dataset in the eight weeks prior to the competition and delivered their results in a 25-minute presentation to a panel of industry experts. The judges select a winner based on technical quality, clarity and originality of presentation as well as team's ability to answer questions.

UNO was one of 12 regional winners that participated in the international competition held in Denver this past May 29-30.



*Mark Johnson, Elijah Adedeji, Joshua Flathers, Dr. Royhan Gani (faculty advisor), Joe Frank, Trey Kramer and Toby Roessler (adjunct faculty member)*

**Mike Fein receives the GCAGS 2015 Distinguished Service Award.**



Mary Broussard — Chairman, 2014-2015 GCAGS Awards and Nominations Committee,  
Michael Fein, and Tom Klekamp, NOGS Citationist

**NOGS' Kathy Haggar receives the Grover E. Murray Best Published Paper Award.  
Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies and Gulf Coast Section SEPM First Place - 2014  
*"Aquifers, Faults, Subsidence, and Lightning Databases"***



Awardee Roice Nelson, GCAGS President Charles Sternbach,  
and awardee/speaker Kathleen S. Haggar (awardee, Les Denham, not pictured)

AWARD PHOTOS TAKEN BY ARTHUR CHRISTENSEN

Arthur S. Waterman and Richard H. Fillon received the GCAGS and GCSSEPM Third Place - 2014 Gordon I. Atwater Best Poster Awards.

*"New Biostratigraphic and Paleoecological Strategies for Defining and Identifying the Basinward 'Edges' of Ancient Continental Shelf Systems"*



Richard H. Fillon, Mary Broussard — Chairman, 2014-2015 GCAGS Awards and Nominations Committee, and Arthur S. Waterman

## Gulf Coast Oil and Gas Environmental Conference

*By Bill Haworth*



AIR & WASTE MANAGEMENT  
ASSOCIATION  
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SINCE 1907

The Gulf Coast Oil and Gas Environmental Conference was held September 22 & 23rd at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in New Orleans. Nearly one hundred participated and saw presentations by representatives of government and industry, including the BOEM, BSEE, LDNR, and LDEQ.

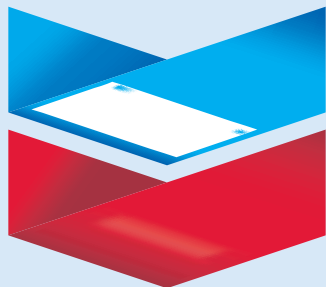
In addition to sessions on regulatory and environmental Issues, there were a number of technical sessions with a more broad focus, including: Hydrocarbon Storage in Salt Caverns, Transportation and Storage of Hydrocarbons, Hydraulic Fracturing, and Oil and Gas Environmental Legislation. NOGS member Chris McLindon presented his study on the Geology of Wetlands Loss in Southeast Louisiana as part of one of these sessions.

Additional information on the conference (including a list of speakers and presentations) can be found on this URL [www.awma.org/gulfcoastoilandgas](http://www.awma.org/gulfcoastoilandgas)

Mark your calendars—next year's Annual Conference & Exhibition will be held in New Orleans, June 20-23. The Air and Waste Management Association (AWMA) sponsor these conferences.



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Submitted by Laura Sorey

On September 28, the world heralded long hoped for news from NASA that scientists have confirmed the presence of liquid water on Mars. The discovery, first published in the journal *Nature Geoscience*, is the first detection of existing water molecules on the Martian surface. There have been previous reports and analyses regarding water based on features like stream channels or sedimentary rocks, as well as the water known to be trapped in the ice caps at the poles. However, this is the first confirmation of existing water in liquid form.

Rather than the ongoing Curiosity Rover expedition, this discovery came from the Compact Reconnaissance Imaging Spectrometer, an instrument that is a part of the NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter. Designed by Lujendra Ojha, the spectrometer was able to analyze previously identified dark linear features called "recurring slope lineae" (RSL) located along the flanks of steep slopes like canyons and craters. This spectrometry analysis confirmed the presence of hydrated salts (perchlorates) consistent with the recent presence of liquid water. In an interview with *The New York Times*, Dr. Alfred S. McEwen, an author from the paper, described the perchlorates as evidence that water was present within days or some similar timeframe. Though many minds think of standing pools of Martian water, the water present is intergranular flow more similar to damp sand that rather than a flowing stream.

According to investigators, the origin of the water itself remains uncertain. The brine associated with the RSL could form atmospheric moisture. Jim Green, NASA's head of planetary science, told the *Washington Post* that the moisture competency of the Martian atmosphere may be higher than previously speculated, though Dr. McEwen's interview with the *Times* said that precise relative humidity at the surface remains uncertain. It's also speculated that the moisture may be derived from the melting of near-surface ice. The absence of Martian ice away from the poles leads paper authors to describe this scenario as "unlikely." A third hypothesis suggests that water may be sourced from some local aquifer. There is an observed seasonal lightening and darkening of the RSL which is incorporated into the paper's hypothesis that seasonal waters form in the Martian soil as the perchlorates hydrate or desiccate with seasonal changes in temperature.

Some publications, like a recent column in the *Post* hasten to remind that this news remains a piece in the larger puzzle of Mars's history of past life or potential to host future life. Indeed scientific discoveries move at a crawl rather than in fits and jumps, and Mars scientists are more likely to be on the brink of forming the right questions to ask rather than finding all the actual answers. However, one cannot help but be reminded of President Kennedy's assessment of the US's role in the Space Race:

*"But why, some say, the Moon? Why choose this as our goal? And they may well ask, why climb the highest mountain? Why, 35 years ago, fly the Atlantic? Why does Rice play Texas?...We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard; because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one we intend to win."*

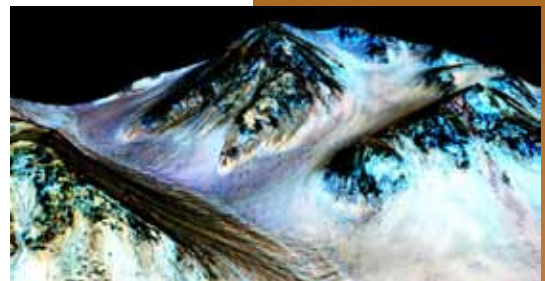
Sources.

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Ojha, Lujendra et al. "Spectral evidence for hydrated salts in recurring slope lineae on Mars." *Nature Geoscience* (2015).



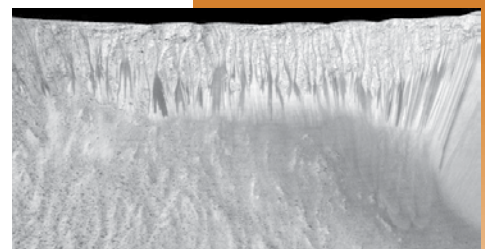
**Scientists say these dark, narrow, downhill streaks are evidence of flowing water on Mars.**

**Credit: Jet Propulsion Laboratory/University of Arizona, via NASA**



**Channels cut in the Martian surface as shot by NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter in 2011.**

**Credit: NASA/Reuters**



**Dark narrow streaks, up to a few hundred yards long, are seen along many slopes on Mars including Garni Crater.**

**Credit: Jet Propulsion Laboratory/University of Arizona/NASA**



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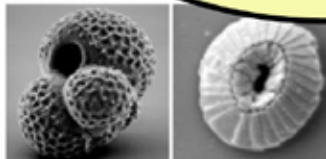
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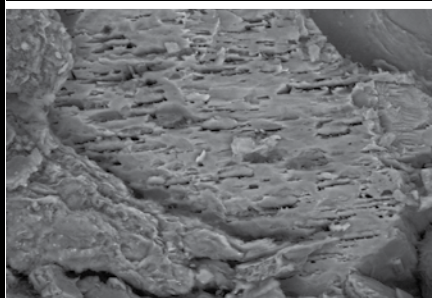
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*The staff of the NOGS LOG  
wishes everyone a  
Happy Thanksgiving!*



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#### Mr. James S. Classen

*In Memory of Tom Blakey, Dick Edmund,  
A.T. Green, and John Petrocco*

#### Trudy and Charles Corona

*In Memory of Dick Edmund, A.T. Green,  
Jack Langford, John Petrocco, Jaser N. Rafidi,  
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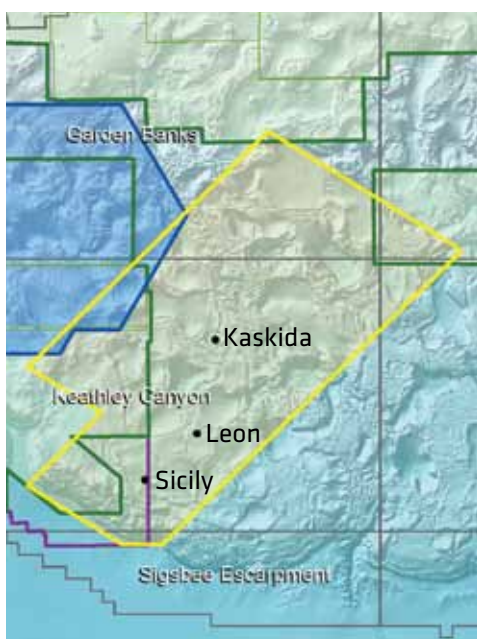
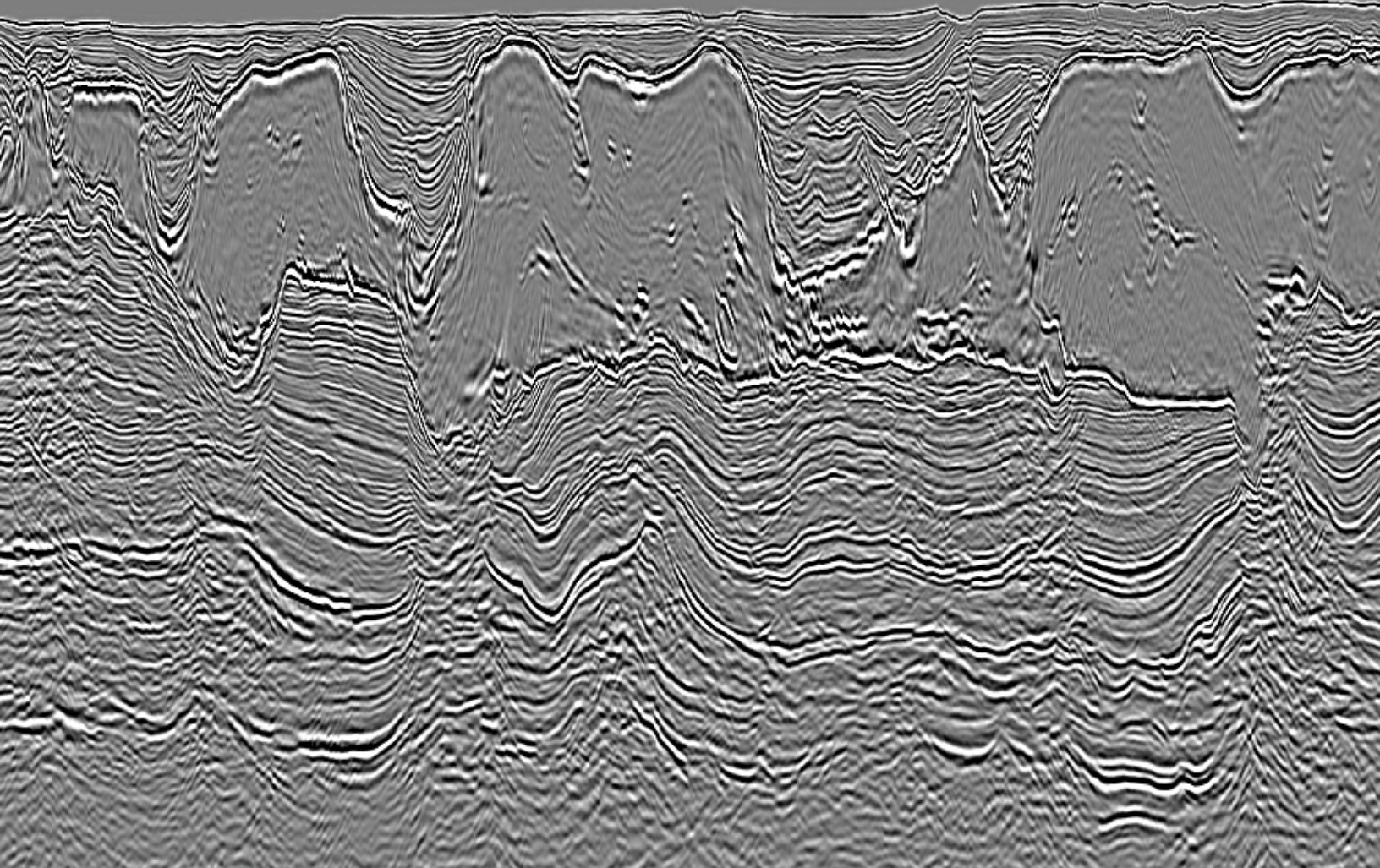
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