

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL GEOLOGISTS

Newsletter

SPRING 2003

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A Message for All Geologists

by Jonathan D. Arthur, PG, Ph.D.

This issue of the FAPG newsletter is addressed to all Florida geologists. Why? The FAPG needs your help to better serve you. The primary goal of the FAPG is to provide a "voice" for our profession. We are doing our best to protect your interests, and we are addressing the issues outlined herein. However, there is much to be said for "strength in numbers." In order for the FAPG to become more effective and proactive, our numbers need to increase—and that is where you come in.

The practice of geology in Florida is regulated because our work can affect the health, safety and welfare of the public, as well as the quality of our fragile environment. The geology licensing program administered by the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) not only provides the public (and the environment) a level of quality assurance in work done by geologists, but it also helps strengthen the integrity of our profession. With your active support of the FAPG, we can succeed in improving the regulation of our profession and our place in Florida's future.

Much like other successful state programs, PG regulation and administration has been quietly effective, cost-efficient and valuable to Florida's citizens and the environment. Is the PG community in crisis right now? No, but we have been there in the past, and it could happen again in the future. As you may recall, the PG licensing program was considered for abolishment twice in recent years when a few decision makers cited the lack of any problems in our profession. Common sense prevailed and the lack of problems was attributed to the success of the program. This year deletion of the PG program is **not** on the table for discussion. So why is there now a need for advocacy of Florida's PGs? The following paragraphs illustrate some of the issues that confront geologists at this time.

Each year, legislative issues are considered that could adversely affect our profession. For example, proposed Senate Bill 956 would reduce the liability of drycleaning facility owners with respect to cleanup of

contaminated soils and groundwater. Reduced liability may translate into a reduction in water resource protection and remedial action, and less work for geologists.

Our governor is also considering proposals to consolidate state trust funds, such as the Inland Protection Trust Fund (IPTF, "Tanks Program"), into a general trust fund. The IPTF was established to provide funds for the cleanup of leaking petroleum storage tanks. Approval of this consolidation could limit or stop environmental cleanup efforts, which would directly affect our ability to do our jobs. Passage of these proposals could mean a loss of jobs for geologists, not to mention adverse environmental impacts. The FAPG is sending a letter to each Florida senator and representative to voice our opposition to this proposal.

In addition to legislative issues that could harm the environment and reduce jobs for geologists, there are imbalances in Florida Statutes that promote other professions to perform environmental work, while not mentioning geologists. For example:

- A common vehicle for the state to outsource environmental work is the Request for Statement of Qualifications (RFSOQ). According to Florida Statutes, only architects, engineers, landscape architects and surveyors can respond to an RFSOQ ("Consultant's Competitive Negotiation Act," Chapter 287.055, F.S.), even if the bulk of the project involves geology.
- The Water Resources Act (Chapter 373, F.S.) identifies only our professional engineer (PE) colleagues as professionals to be called on for water supply data and interpretations.

Another inequity for your consideration: Florida Statutes call for an engineering internship program that allows recent college graduates to take a portion of the PE exam. This program also allows these interns to formally state their intention to become PEs while obtaining the requisite professional experience. No such program exists for geologists even though the governor-

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Executive Committee 2003

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FAPG Elects New Officers

Members of the Florida Association of Professional Geologists have elected new officers to serve on the Executive Committee of the association:

- Jon Arthur President
- Cliff Harrison Vice President
- Carlos Lemos Treasurer
- Mervin Dale Secretary

President Jon Arthur is a Florida native and received his B.S. and Ph.D. degrees from Florida State University. He supervises the Florida Department of Environmental Protection - Florida Geological Survey Hydrogeology Program. Vice President Cliff Harrison, also a Florida native, graduated from the University of South Florida and is senior hydrogeologist and production manager at Schreuder Inc. Born in Brazil, Treasurer Carlos Lemos came to the United States to attend North Carolina State where he earned a B.A. in geology. When he retired in 1992, he was a principle geologist and manager of Law Engineering in Tampa. Secretary Dale Mervin was born in Morocco, Africa, and attended the University

of Oklahoma where he received a B.S. in chemistry. He also earned a B.S. and an M.S. in geology from the University of Florida. Mr. Mervin is employed by the Tetra Tech NUS Inc. in Jacksonville, where he works on the U.S. Navy's Clean III contract.

The FAPG is the professional association in Florida whose sole purpose is to advocate for professional geologists. Through the FAPG, geologists have full-time staff in Tallahassee working to ensure the future of professional geology in Florida. The FAPG is committed to maintaining the integrity of the PG license and making sure that professional geologists are given parity with other regulated professionals.

For more information about the FAPG, call Robert Skrob, 850/222-6000, or e-mail, robert@fapg.org.

If you have feedback or ideas about the direction of the FAPG, please contact FAPG's new President Jon Arthur by e-mail, jarthur45@comcast.net.

Board of Professional Geologists Accepts Complaints

If you suspect that a non-geologist is performing geology without a license, or a PG is performing unprofessional work, it is your duty as a licensee to notify the Florida Board

of Professional Geologists. You may file a complaint online at: [https://www.myfloridalicense.com/entercomplaint.asp?SID=.](https://www.myfloridalicense.com/entercomplaint.asp?SID=)

Calendar of Events

April 16-17, 2003

Significance of Caves and Watershed Management and Protection in Florida
Ocala, Florida

May 2, 2003

2003 Florida Legislative Session
Ends

May 14-15, 2003

Florida Board of Professional Geologists
Cape Canaveral, Florida

May 15-17, 2003

FGWA Convention and Trade Show
Cape Canaveral, Florida
Radisson Resort at the Port

December 9-12, 2003

NGWA Annual Meeting
Orlando, Florida

Update: Geologist in Training Program

Based on the positive response from the professional geologist community concerning the possibility of implementing a Geologist in Training (GIT) program in the state of Florida, the PG Board will ask the Legislature to sponsor enabling legislation. The proposal will not be heard during this session, but it is hoped that consideration of the program will be part of the 2004 proceedings. The FAPG will lobby in support of this legislation.

Under the proposed program, graduating geologists would be allowed to take the first part of the PG exam (the fundamentals/general geology portion) upon graduation. Individual university geology departments could choose to use this as an "exit" exam and possibly make passing the exam a requirement for

graduation. The geologist would be designated as a geologist in training upon successfully passing this part of the exam.

The second part of the exam (applied experience) would be taken after the geologist meets the experience requirements. This would be taken upon being approved by the PG Board as having met the experience and other statutory requirements leading to becoming a PG.

Several states, including Mississippi, have instituted a GIT program. One of the benefits of having a GIT program is the issuance of wall certificates identifying individuals within the program as GITs. These certificates can be displayed in their offices and identifies them as persons with the professional goal of becoming a licensed professional

geologist. The initials G.I.T. can be placed after their names on business cards and such, giving them a professional demeanor while acquiring their experience and possibly earning them more money while they do it. Perhaps a more important benefit is the additional protection of public safety and welfare by assuring that all practicing geologists, even those who are not yet licensed, have met the standards of minimum geologic competency prior to being employed and serving the public.

Please e-mail your comments on this issue to FAPG Past President Walter Wood, PG, at wwood@cfl.rr.com or mail them to the FAPG Executive Office at P.O. Box 14629, Tallahassee, FL 32317-4629. Your feedback will be forwarded to the PG Board.

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appointed Board of Professional Geologists (PG Board) has recommended one to the DBPR.

There's more. Did you know that the DBPR, rather than the PG Board, manages disciplinary actions against PGs? Most geologists likely would prefer a "jury of their peers." Since the PG Board does not have disciplinary authority, a violation or disciplinary action taken against a non-geologist that involves geological services is not communicated to the PG Board. In the event a PE is involved in such action, the PE Board handles the issue (as opposed to the DBPR) without PG input. The FAPG will work toward providing PG representation or input to the PE Board and will also work to move handling of PG-related disciplinary actions to the PG Board.

Consider the *hypothetical* newspaper article on this page ... do we want to see this type of headline?

Again, this story is *fiction*. The grim truth, however, is that this could happen down the road, and the efforts of the FAPG have gone far and will go even farther to avoid this type of scenario.

Although the FAPG has been instrumental in halting two efforts to deregulate our profession, we are not prepared to rest on these laurels. The FAPG is your advocate, and we are working to heighten awareness of our profession, provide

education and "networking" opportunities, and strengthen communication and a sense of community within our profession. If you are not already a member, *please consider joining us*. We have work to do, but

we need your help! Your membership helps increase our funding base and our ability to lobby effectively on these legislative issues. Thank you for taking the time to consider this message.

A hypothetical newspaper article:

Six people in hospital blame geologist

Affiliated Publishers

Ft. Lucia, Florida – Charges are pending against a geologist accused of contributing to the contamination of the public water supply in this northwest Florida community. Local officials and residents charge that John Doegh constructed a small well field for Ft. Lucia without completing adequate hydrogeologic investigations. "Permitting agencies are not to blame," says City Commissioner Frank Dunworthy, who explains that cutbacks have overburdened these government programs. The county approved the permit based on a template of minimum requirements and does not have enough staff to inspect each permitted well. Dunworthy says the permitting agency is not to blame for changes Doegh made in the well design after receiving the permit.

Although Doegh met the minimum criteria for designing the well field on paper, complainants say he should have considered additional basics of his science before changing the design to cut costs. Instead of casing the wells below an underground clay layer to tap deeper, cleaner zones of the Floridan aquifer, the new wells pull water from shallow *and* deep zones. A local hydrogeologist says it is common knowledge that the shallow zones are contaminated near the old business district, which is located a short distance "up-gradient" of the well field.

Doegh admits that he did not case the well as designed in the permit in order to cut costs, and he apologized to the six people who are sick because of the poor water quality from the wells. "Even if I get sued, at least I can keep practicing geology—I have kids to feed. I came to Florida to practice geology because it's no longer regulated here. In other states, you have to have a lot of experience and take a test ... and I hate tests."

FAPG Legislative Watch

Bill Status Report

To protect your profession and promote the interests of the environment, FAPG is watching the following legislative proposals. If you would like details on any of these proposals visit www.FAPG.org for current information.

HB 741/SB 956 Drycleaning Solvent Clean Up

Relating to limiting liability of property owners for cleaning up property contaminated as a result of operation of drycleaning facility or wholesale supply facility.

HB 1049/SB 2464 Engineering

Relating to revising provisions regarding examinations required to practice in this state as an engineer; requires certification of any business organization offering engineering services to the public; revises disciplinary penalties.

HB 1069 Water Resources

Relating to requiring local governments to include projected water use in comprehensive plans, includ-

ing potable water facilities and availability of water resources as components of comprehensive plan.

HB 1101/SB 728 Rural Lands Program Trust Fund

Relating to providing for distribution of certain excise taxes on documents to the Trust Fund; authorizes issuance of bonds for rural land protection and provides certain conditions.

HB 1123 Site Rehabilitation/Contaminated Sites

Relating to extending application of risk-based corrective action principles to all contaminated sites resulting from discharge of pollutants or hazardous substances.

HB 1459/SB 2316 Water Resources

Relating to providing for development of water conservation guidance manual by DEP; provides purpose and contents of manual; requires water management districts to adopt manual in their rules.

LEGISLATIVE
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HB 1503/SB 2656 Aquifer Storage & Recovery Wells

Relating to requiring semiannual reports by DEP regarding aquifer storage and recovery wells and other underground injection control programs.