

The 2000s

The birth of the AGS-Photographic Guild of Nova Scotia Geology and Photography Competition occurred in 2000. Each year, the winning photograph is selected from several entries submitted by members of the Photographic Guild. To encourage participation, AGS organizes an annual field trip, which usually attracts about 20 photographers, to one of the classic geological sites in Nova Scotia. Venues have included Five Islands (2002), Joggins (2003), East Bay and Wasson Bluff (2004), Five Islands (2005) and Blue Beach (2006). A second trophy, The Last Billion Years Award, was introduced in 2005. The winner must be a photograph of somewhere in the Maritime Provinces. Photographs chosen as the winners are available to AGS for use in publications and in displays.

Nova Scotia EdGEO workshops continued apace with an annual schedule as follows: Antigonish (2000), Parrsboro (2001), Digby (2002), Parrsboro (2003), Dartmouth (2004), Halifax and Parrsboro (2005), Dartmouth (2006), Wolfville (2007), Dartmouth (2008) and Parrsboro (2009).

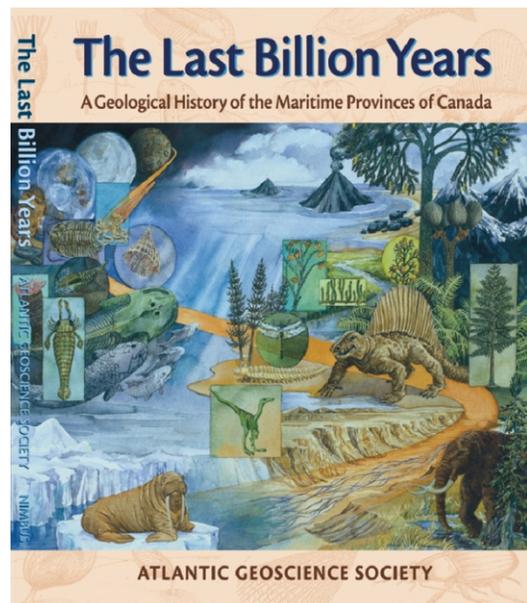
A new look in outreach products was first mooted at the 1995 Annual Meeting in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. There, it was proposed that there should be a popular book on the geology of the Maritime Provinces, written so that high school students or lay people would find it interesting and informative. This developed into *The Last Billion Years: a Geological History of the Maritime Provinces of Canada*, which is a 212 page volume. The book is attractively illustrated, with water-colour paintings, photographs, line drawings, dioramas, schematics and geological maps, most in full colour. Production of *The Last Billion Years* has truly been a regional endeavour, with contributions from the Geological Survey of Canada, Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources, Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board and most regional universities.



Wave action exemplifies the role of water in erosion, as shown in this scene from Neils Harbour, Cape Breton, N.S.
[Photo by Nick Honig]



Participants in the 2000 EdGEO Workshop held in Antigonish.



Cover page for *The Last Billion Years*

The Last Billion Years, co-published by the Society and Nimbus Publishing, became available for purchase on 10th July 2001. The first print run was for 2100 copies, although some advised printing only 1000. To the surprise of AGS members and Nimbus, the book was out of print in five weeks. After discussions with Nimbus, it was agreed to reprint 2000 copies. The reprinted version was released in early November (5th). This was sold out in January 2002, necessitating a third printing of 3000 in February 2002, with a fourth printing of 2000 in 2003. At the end of 2007, sales stood at about 8000, making it a Canadian best-seller.

In 2003, AGS held a joint meeting with the Northeastern Section of the Geological Society of America. This conference took place 27th-29th March in the Westin Hotel, Halifax. The attendance was impressive, with over 650 geologists and friends from various parts of Canada and the USA braving the unpredictable “spring” weather. One of the most popular events was the education session, “Communicating the Relevance of Earth Science”, held on the Saturday and organized by Jennifer Bates. At this, many of the talks were hands-on demonstrations, a great hit with the 42 teachers and several geologists who attended.

The AGS poster, “The Evolving Maritimes” was on sale for the first time at the above meeting. The center piece of the poster is the cover painting from The Last Billion Years. As part of the poster, a comprehensive text describes, in English and French, the evolution of the Earth and of our region's animals and plants.

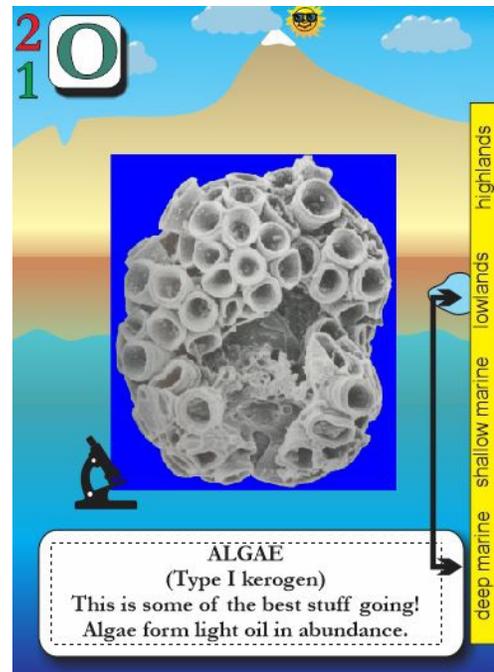
One disappointment of recent years was the demise of the AGS evening talk series. These were held, primarily in Halifax, for about twenty years but as time passed the audiences became too few to justify continuing. Several Society members banded together in 2001 and decided to try again but with a different slant. The first year, 2001-2002, featured speakers who had authored chapters in the book The Last Billion Years. Talks were held on the third Wednesday evening of each month at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, which was a co-sponsor of the series.



Jennifer Bates (right), Chair and one of the presenters at the 1994 EdGEO Workshop held at Bedford Institute of Oceanography



Poster entitled “The Evolving Maritimes”



The series, “The Last Billion Years” opened in September 2001. Because of its success, the series was reborn in 2002-2003 as “Beyond the Last Billion Years” and continued to thrive for several years. The talks have drawn impressive turnouts, with crowds averaging over 100 for the second season. The third season had one or two bumps resulting from hurricane Juan but proved just as popular. For 2004, there was a new slant. Complimentary copies of the poster, The Evolving Maritimes were handed out to draw winners at the beginning of each talk. Another slant was the awarding of copies of The Last Billion Years to those who attended all the talks in the 2003-2004 year. This was continued in 2004-2005 and 2005-2006. But it was discontinued in 2007, when the talk series moved to Bedford Institute for a year. The biggest surprise was that very few geoscientists attended the talks. But the interest of the general public made up for the low numbers of geoscientists.

In 2004, AGS published Nova Scotia Rocks. This brochure included over 40 photographs of geological highlights, with a brief accompanying write-up. The photographs are attractively displayed around a geological map of the province on which the sites are pinpointed. Museums and companies with a geological bent are featured on the obverse side of the brochure, with a highway map showing location of the operation according to the provincial trail. Thirty seven thousand copies of the brochure were printed, thanks to generous funding from the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage. In July 2004, the Department mailed 10,000 copies to individual tourist offices for free distribution. Apparently, the brochures are proving very popular, selling (a play on words) out several times at the Halifax Airport location.

Producing such publications as The Last Billion Years and Nova Scotia Rocks has given the Education Committee an added appreciation of the importance of visuals, whether paintings, photographs or schematics. This awareness played a major role in the Fundy Basin Poster project, which started in 2003. One of the products was a series of water colours by Judi Pennanen, the artist who has 15 paintings featured in The Last Billion Years, courtesy of the New Brunswick Museum. The five watercolours, all by Judi, show landscapes in Wolfville, Blomidon,



Cover of the first edition of Nova Scotia Rocks



Judi Pennanen with one of her AGS paintings

North Mountain Basalt, and McCoy Brook times, plus a dramatic scene starring prosauropods. Visually, all five are striking and are available in a set of postcards. The intent is to use the paintings, which are on display at the Fundy Geological Museum, as the focus of a booklet on the Mesozoic history of the Fundy Basin.

AGS had four important milestones in 2005. The first was organizing Halifax 2005, a joint meeting of the Geological Association of Canada, the Mineralogical Association of Canada, the Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists and the Canadian Society of Soil Science. Although the weather was not too cooperative, the meeting was highly successful, judging by the impressive turnout, the excellent technical and field trip programs, and the entertaining social events.

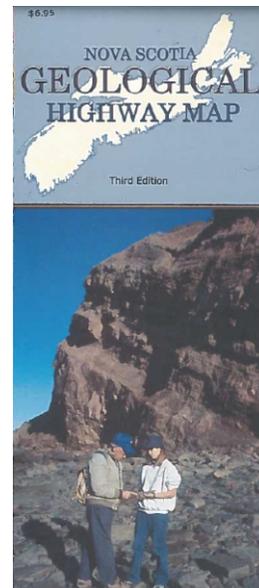
Publication of the third edition of the Nova Scotia Geological Highway Map was the second significant accomplishment in 2005. The map has been considerably enhanced with upgraded graphics, resulting in an aesthetically pleasing product. Sales have been as impressive as the previous two editions.

Another encouraging outreach development has been the New Brunswick EdGEO program, with the first one organized by Dave Lentz and the New Brunswick EdGEO branch and held in Fredericton.

The fourth milestone with potentially major implications, the decision to be as a participant in CRYSTAL. This research program, under the leadership of the University of New Brunswick's Department of Education, was to evaluate the success in teaching science in schools throughout the Maritime Provinces. One of the evaluations was to focus on the achievements of outreach programs, such as the EdGEO Workshops and the various products that AGS has produced. Regretfully, the National Science and Engineering Research Council, which was funding CRYSTAL, terminated the program the following year.



Judi Pennanen's painting of prosauropods, one of her assignments from AGS



2005 edition of the Nova Scotia Geological Highway Map



New Brunswick EdGEO Workshop

An important accomplishment of the Society has been the development of EarthNet (<http://www.earthnet-geonet.ca/>). EarthNet was a database of earth science resources that are useful to elementary and high school teachers. Other features were: “Classroom Activities” which teachers could download at no cost; an illustrated “Glossary of Terms”, a “Calendar of Events” that informed users of events in their part of Canada; “Geology in the Classroom”, a Q & A section where previously answered questions were also posted; “Earth Science Site of the Week” where a new science site was featured every week, “Exploring the Dynamic Earth”, where animation and video were supplemented illustrations photographs and text and the “Virtual Field Trip”, which takes you to one of the spectacular sections in Nova Scotia (and eventually throughout Canada). The project, initiated by AGS was adopted by the Canadian Geoscience Education Network, the premier organization of geologists devoted to advancing outreach activities in Canada. EarthNet has also been supported by the Geological Survey of Canada.

EarthNet was revitalized in 2004, through renewed interest by the Geological Survey of Canada in updating the site. This rising from the ashes included the formation of a National EarthNet Committee and a Development Committee. The latter operated out of GSC (Atlantic) and included a high proportion of AGS members. The database was redesigned and updated with some major improvements, especially in the “Glossary”, “The Virtual Field Trip”, and the “Resources” sections. Son of EarthNet, the revised version, was released in 2005: <http://www.earthnet-geonet.ca/hNet>. Unfortunately funding for his far-sighted project was terminated after a few years.

After the financially successful Halifax 2005 meeting, AGS's share of the profits materialized in the bank in 2006, and the first third was promptly allocated to the major task of digitizing the entire run of Atlantic Geology (now Atlantic Geoscience). The last printed edition of the journal was volume 42 – all subsequent issues have been electronic.



Categories in EarthNet



Gordon Fader flying over the Harbour during filming for Halifax Harbour: “A Geological Journey”

In April 2006, after a hiatus of over 15 years, the video committee released “Halifax Harbour: A Geological Journey”. “Halifax Harbour” tells the story of this famous harbour, from formation of the Meguma Group to the present day, and looks into the future with predictions about sea-level rise. Charlie Doucet of MoonGlow Digital Video Productions Ltd. served as producer and director, the scientific director was Gordon Fader, and narration was by George Jordan. The unexpected delay in completion of the video reflected the difficulty of obtaining funding.

A considerable escalation in activity for the Society under the presidencies of Ian Spooner, Mike Parsons and David Mosher took place in the final four years of the decade. In part this was accomplished by using teleconferencing technology to bring Council members together for regular meetings, thus ensuring better opportunities for people in far-flung parts to participate.

Some of the new directions involved supporting the organization of Halifax 2008 Conjugate Margins of the Central Atlantic conference, and starting a run of many years participating in the Parrsboro (now Nova Scotia) Gem and Mineral Show. The always-active Nova Scotia EdGEO group started holding their annual workshops as part of the Nova Scotia Association of Science Teachers meeting held in Halifax every October, and the Society teamed up with APICS (now Science Atlantic) to run the annual speaker tour to the area universities. An increasing workload, especially involving publications and other products (even AGS mugs!) resulted in Nelly Koziel assuming the handling of these items out of the Bedford Institute of Oceanography. Nelly became increasingly involved in the affairs of the Society over the next ten years, regularly staffing the booth at the annual colloquia and at the table at the Parrsboro Gem and Mineral Show.

A growing conviction that the average age of the Society might exceed its membership numbers led to increased action to recruit students. The first attempt was to have a Student Liaison Coordinator, a position that was approved by the Society but never filled. There followed a free-ranging discussion at the annual colloquium, which led to the expansion of Council to include two student members, one a



Mike MacDonald taking a risk.



Georges Island



Nellie Koziel in her office at BIO

graduate student, the other a member of the upcoming year's Atlantic Universities Geoscience Conference (AUGC) committee. This has helped to ensure student voices are heard on Council. Student participation has always been a major component of the annual colloquia, and recognition of students presentations expanded from a single prize for the best oral presentation (the Rupert MacNeill Award) to also include the best poster presentation (the Graham Williams Award). In 2008, two outstanding talks were given back to back at the Colloquium by Marc Laflamme and Matt Stimson – but Marc's presentation was at a much higher level as he was then concluding his PhD research, whereas Matt at the time was a second-year undergraduate student. Much angst among the judges and others fortunate enough to witness both presentations led to the introduction of awards for graduate and undergraduate presentations, the Sandra Barr Award for best graduate student's oral presentation, and the Rob Raeside Award for best graduate student's poster presentation.

Two long-time members of the Society were specially recognized in 2008 – Graham Williams, after, many years involvement was awarded a life-time membership, which would save him the princely sum of \$5, the annual dues, and the Distinguished Service Award was renamed the Laing Ferguson Distinguished Service Award in honour of his role in establishing the Society and long commitment to it.

Another major venture as the noughties drew to a close was the decision by two members of the Society, one of them Rob Fensome, to be the lead editors for a new book, *Four Billion Years and Counting: Canada's Geological Heritage*, which was to be coordinated by CFES to coincide with the IYPE (International Year of Planet Earth).



Rob Fensome and Graham Williams, the editors of “Four Billion Years and Counting”



Brendan Murphy working in his office

Some losses occurred through this period too. Publication of a regular newsletter ended – the frequency of its production had been dropping for several years, and electronic communications were becoming increasingly available. All information (conference fliers, notice of events, community announcements) were now channeled through a dedicated email distribution list. Likewise, the regular Halifax evening meetings concluded their nearly 40-year run, the result of a temporary closure of the Nova Scotia Museum's location in Halifax. Another demise, but with a positive outcome, saw Atlantic Geology complete the switch-over from a bound journal to an electronic-only interface, and join the Canadian Geoscience Knowledge Network. The rate of article publications continued unabated, though. In 2007, David McMullin concluded eight years of service as production manager for Atlantic Geology as he passed the reins over to Chris White.

NEED photo of Chris White