

Teachers Describe Their Experiences at the IGS Summer Field Workshop for Idaho Earth Science Educators

Note: The following is a workshop project contributed by Jacque Salisbury in 2007. It describes workshop experiences of a cross-section of teachers following the 2007 Island Park workshop. My thanks to all the teachers for their comments.

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First of all I have taught Earth Science and related areas for 35 years. You might ask why another "class" in geology would be of any use to someone that has taught it this long. One of the words that come to mind is rejuvenation, to continue updating and getting pumped up for the upcoming year. This class does it for me. We meet in different areas of the state, the travel is sometimes daunting, but the learning from professionals in the area is rewarding. As an Earth Science teacher geology is only part of the constantly changing standards, but it is still the heart and soul of Earth Science. If you don't know one rock from another it hurts your credibility. If you don't know the hazards geology poses for your community, it's hard to make it real. In conclusion if you're new to the teaching of Earth Science or an Old Dog like me, there are many positives to attending and participating in IESTA and this IGS field workshop.

Respectfully

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I have attended most of the Geology and Geologic Hazards workshops since the inception of the class in the mid'80's. The field research projects completed during these classes, the wealth of information gleaned from the staff of professional geologists, and the many lesson plans generated by class participants have woven their way into my curriculum. Teaching more about Idaho's geology has allowed me to help students become more comfortable with their immediate natural surroundings. Plus, by first working through the geology of what they have seen before, students find it much easier to comprehend more complex global geological scenarios. The hazards component of the class has provided me with tons of application level materials, especially in the realm of earthquake and volcano preparedness.



The IESTA summer field experiences have been wonderful for me. The re-energizing of what I teach day to day is the single BEST component of the workshop. After I leave each weeklong session, it is with a deep sense of renewal and wonder about our Earth. The hands-on approach these field experiences offer cannot be gained through any textbook or online publications. To be able to share ideas and thoughts with my colleagues around the state cannot be measured by any means. Some friendships and contacts made through IESTA field experiences have proven to stay with me throughout my teaching career, no matter what part of Idaho I am teaching in. I have continued to learn so much about our state and it amazes me every time I attend a camp that there is so much more to learn. I often wonder what kind of teacher I may have become, had I not participated in the first field workshop I attended. That one, way back in 1992 set the stage for all that I am and what I have become!

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I teach Physical Science to 8th graders. Chemistry and Physics have many abstract concepts that tie in great with Earth Science. Summer IGS Workshops have provided me with exceptional resources. I return to my classroom with 'way cool' rock specimens, a course outline with maps and information, photo opportunities, and knowledge that will grab student interest. Most importantly, I am recharged and excited to teach required curriculum with a new twist.

For a nominal price, teachers have the opportunity to attend a workshop organized and presented by professionals from IGS, Homeland Security and more! The classroom is outdoor Idaho. Wow!

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It's all about making connections! I now have a list of earth science teachers around the state that I know to ask questions of, share ideas with, and celebrate successes. Having well known geology experts with you in a relaxed setting allows you to ask any question, even if you are afraid of sounding "stupid". I have learned so much, and have had a blast!



A Master of Science in Earth Science Education has certainly provided an excellent foundation of knowledge to support my Gr. 6 classroom science programs during the past 15 years. However, it has been my participation in 14 of the 17 Annual Summer Geology Field Workshops sponsored by the Idaho Geology Survey and Idaho Homeland Security (formerly Idaho Bureau of Disaster Services) which has truly connected my knowledge of the earth sciences to the geological diversity and richness of my students' home state of Idaho. These outstanding workshops bring together the expertise of professionals active in geology, mining safety, disaster mitigation and regional issues whose presentations during the workshop have definitely enhanced my classroom teaching. Participants are able to collect samples directly from the field as well as obtain classroom materials from numerous government agencies and programs such as Out of the Rock. I have especially benefited from the extensive experience of my fellow educators as we prepare relevant lesson plans and projects during the course of the five-day field experience. Plus, the workshops have been totally enjoyable as we are treated to two delicious BBQs, gorgeous Idaho scenery, a fun-filled Rock Raffle and the camaraderie of delightful folks and their families. I always look forward to exploring our beautiful state during these summer events and encourage veteran and new teachers to join us.

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IGS and IESTA have continually provided summer field-courses which have been held throughout the state. These courses have allowed teachers up-to-date research which the geologists have been doing, networked earth science teachers throughout the state, and provided invaluable resources for the classroom. There is no duplication of these field courses in the state at any of the universities for teachers' continuing professional development. I have always valued my time spent at these field courses in the summer and look forward each year to the next location and what I can add to my curriculum content knowledge.

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