

## **Highlights and News Clippings from Earth Science Week 2004**

### Introduction

The seventh annual Earth Science Week, held October 10-16, 2004, was a success event that engaged partners and participants from around the globe. It celebrated the theme “Living on a Restless Earth: Natural Hazards and Mitigation.” Major partners in the program this year included the US Geological Survey, the American Association of Petroleum Geologists Foundation, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the National Park Service, who generously provided funding, kit materials, and publicity for the program. The Earth Science Week program is administered by the American Geological Institute (AGI).

Earth Science Week (ESW) materials, events, and media coverage reached more than 1.7 million people in 2004. ESW posters were included in five publications, including *Geotimes*, *GSA Today*, *AAPG Explorer*, *The Science Teacher* (NSTA), and *Science Scope* (NSTA), with a total distribution of 97,200. The ESW Web site received more than 50,000 visitors in the year leading up to the celebration. People in all 50 states and more than seven countries worldwide participated by hosting events, visiting classrooms, and taking part in Earth science activities. In addition, more than 380 people entered AGI’s Art, Essay and Photography Contests in celebration of the week.

This Highlights and News Clippings volume is designed to give you an overview of activities planned and hosted by other organizations for ESW. We hope you find ideas for events and publicity strategies that inspire development of your own ESW celebration. A list of events that took place around the world is located in Section 1. ESW events ranged from classroom activities conducted by individual teachers and students to open houses held at large USGS field stations. This list represents only the events reported to AGI, so please notify ESW staff if your participation is not listed.

Some of the exemplary events held during Earth Science Week 2004 are highlighted in Section 2. You are invited to use these highlights to get ideas or inspiration for your own future ESW participation and to learn about the activities of other Earth science professionals, educators, and enthusiasts.

Each year, more people become aware of Earth Science Week by reading an article or watching a televised story about the week in the news media. In 2004, printed media about the week reached more than 1.6 million readers. Section 3 is a compilation of examples of print coverage that appeared in regional and national publications advertising ESW program events.

As always, please visit [www.earthsciweek.org](http://www.earthsciweek.org) for more information about Earth Science Week, or contact program staff at [info@earthsciweek.org](mailto:info@earthsciweek.org) if we can assist you in planning your own participation!

## **SECTION 1**

### **Earth Science Week 2004: Summary of Activities**

#### ESW Kits

AGI distributed a record number of information kits in 2004, sending almost 14,500 packets to teachers and geoscientists across the country (up 26 percent from 11,500 in 2003). The kits featured valuable posters, flyers and activities from AGI, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Digital Library for Earth System Education (DLESE), Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology (IRIS), the National Weather Service/NOAA, and the Southern California Earthquake Center (SCEC). In 2005, AGI plans to increase the number of kits distributed by producing and sending out 18,000 kits.

#### Web Resources

The ESW web site provided users with a format consistent in 2004 with that of former years. Changes were made, where appropriate, to reflect the new theme, contests, and classroom activities, but the layout and design remained essentially the same as in 2003. The Web site is part of AGI's larger outreach Web resource, Earth Science World, which received a Scientific American Science and Technology Web Award as one of the top five Web sites for Earth and Environmental Science.

The Earth Science Week Web site received over 9,978 Web hits in October 2004, compared to 8,742 hits to the in October 2002 and 15,000 in all of 2003. This is evidence not only that the Earth Science Week Web site remains an important tool for educating the public about the event, but also that we can increase use of the site further with dedicated marketing.

#### Newsletters

More than 1,100 teachers, students, and geoscientists subscribe to the bimonthly Earth Science Week Newsletter. This electronic newsletter keeps planners and participants up-to-date on Earth Science Week planning at the national level and encourages participation in local areas. Program staff distributed five newsletters in the months and weeks leading up to Earth Science Week 2004.

#### National Contests

AGI held national contests in connection with Earth Science Week for the third consecutive year in 2004. The contests were designed to encourage K-12 students, teachers, and the general public to get involved in the event by exploring artistic and academic applications of Earth science. We received more than 380 entries in the art, essay, and photography contests and awarded a grand prize of \$300 plus a complimentary one-year subscription to *Geotimes* to the winner in each category.

#### Official Proclamations

Official proclamations of Earth Science Week were issued by 23 states, including: Alaska, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and West Virginia.

In addition, President George W. Bush officially recognized the week with a Presidential Message from the White House. "Americans are blessed to live amid many wonders of nature," wrote President Bush. "We have made remarkable progress over the years in protecting our environment and natural resources, and we must continue to conserve our national heritage through good stewardship. Earth scientists improve our understanding of the world around us and help ensure that our national treasures remain clean, safe, and a source of pride to our citizens."

### Key Findings of the Professional Evaluation of Earth Science Week 2004

For the third consecutive year, AGI contracted a professional evaluator to conduct a comprehensive survey of ESW newsletter recipients and contacts of AGI. The evaluator generated a report that provided AGI with critical information about the strengths and weaknesses of the program and will help guide future planning.

Following Earth Science Week 2004, approximately 1,400 people were e-mailed a survey asking for their participation information and opinions about Earth Science Week. There were 158 valid responses to the survey, yielding a response rate of 11 percent. Of these valid responses, 37 percent represented teachers, 10 percent represented administrators, and 53 percent fell into the category of “other, which includes geoscientists, museum professionals, and those in other educational-related fields.

Overall participation in Earth Science Week dropped from 2003 levels to almost 60 percent of respondents participating in the week (down from about 76 percent in 2003). Eighty-five percent of respondents projected that they will participate in Earth Science Week in 2005, which is comparable to projected levels for participation in 2004.

Perceived usefulness ratings remained strong relative to 2003 levels, with 76 percent of respondents rating Earth Science Week as *excellent* or *good*. This result signals a substantial improvement from 2002, and a slight improvement from 2003.

Survey respondents also provided comments regarding ways to improve Earth Science Week. These recommendations centered mainly on publicity surrounding the week. About 82 percent of the respondents said that media coverage was either nonexistent or marginal, and 47 percent asserted that publicity should be increased to improve Earth Science Week. Nineteen percent of respondents suggested that more “incentives,” such as patches, kits, and contests, be created to entice student participation. As in years past, respondents also suggested that Earth Science Week kits be made available earlier in the year so that teachers and others could plan to participate in program events sooner.

### **ESW Sponsors**

US Geological Survey  
American Association of Petroleum Geologists Foundation

### **ESW Contributors**

Digital Library for Earth System Education (DLESE)  
Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology (IRIS)  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)  
National Park Service  
National Weather Service/NOAA  
Southern California Earthquake Center (SCEC)  
U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)  
American Geological Institute (AGI)