



## The 7 – 8 August 2008 Eruption of Kasatochi Volcano Central Aleutian Islands, Alaska

**Chris Waythomas and Stephanie Prejean**  
US Geological Survey, Alaska Volcano Observatory  
Anchorage, AK

*Note: AGS meetings will be at the BP Energy Center for 2010-2011.  
Please check the website ([www.alaskageology.org](http://www.alaskageology.org)) and issues of the AGS newsletter for updates.  
This newsletter promotes the January luncheon talk of the Alaska Geological Society,  
to be held Thursday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, at the BP Energy Center.*

Kasatochi volcano in the central Aleutian Islands erupted unexpectedly on 7–8 August 2008. Prior to the eruption, the volcano had received little study by volcanologists and has had no confirmed historical eruptions. The island is an important nesting area for seabirds and a long-term biological study site of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. After a notably energetic pre-eruptive earthquake swarm, the volcano erupted violently in a series of explosive events beginning in the early afternoon of 7 August. The first earthquakes of the swarm were detected about one month prior to the eruption onset, but at the time, the origin and significance of these earthquakes was not known. Within about 48 hours of the initial explosion, the swarm intensified and attracted the attention of AVO and AEIC scientists. The largest earthquake of the swarm had a moment magnitude 5.8, and many of the earthquakes were larger than magnitude 4. The earthquake swarm highlights the complex interaction of tectonic and magmatic processes in this region and although intrusion of magma initiated the swarm, the earthquakes clearly developed in a regional tectonic context.

Each of the four main explosive events produced ash-gas plumes that reached 14–18 km above sea level. The main volcanic plume contained a large amount of SO<sub>2</sub> and was tracked around the northern hemisphere by satellite observations. The cumulative volcanic cloud interfered with air travel across the North Pacific, causing many flight cancellations that affected

### AGS Luncheon

**Date & Time:** January 20<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

**Program:** Eruption of Kasatochi Volcano

**Speaker:** Chris Waythomas & Stephanie Prejean

**Place:** BP Energy Center

**Reservations:** Please make your reservation before noon Tuesday Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

**Cost:** Seminar only, no meal: Free

Reserve a box lunch: \$15

Reserve a hot lunch: \$20

Lunch with no reservation:  
On an "as-available" basis only

**E-mail reservations:** [vp@alaskageology.org](mailto:vp@alaskageology.org)  
Or phone (907) 269-8673  
(Ken Helmold, AGS VP)

**For more information:** visit the AGS website:

[www.alaskageology.org](http://www.alaskageology.org)

thousands of travelers. Visits to the volcano in 2008–2010 indicated that the eruption generated pyroclastic flows and surges that swept all flanks of the island, accumulated several tens of meters of pyroclastic debris, and increased the diameter of the island by about 800 m. Pyroclastic-flow deposits emplaced on the island contain mostly accidental lithic debris derived from the inner walls of the Kasatochi crater. Juvenile material in the pyroclastic deposits is less abundant and consists of crystal-rich silicic andesite (59% SiO<sub>2</sub>) that ranges from slightly pumiceous to frothy pumice. Fine-grained pyroclastic surge and fall deposits with accretionary lapilli cover the lithic-rich pyroclastic flow deposits and mark a change in eruptive style from episodic explosive activity to more continuous ash emission with smaller intermittent

explosions. The pyroclastic deposits completely cover the island and extend offshore several hundred meters. Wave erosion along the coast and gully development on the flanks has begun to modify the surface mantle of volcanic deposits, and this has important implications for the reestablishment of biotic habitat on the island.

The entire eruption lasted roughly 24 hours and radically transformed the morphology and habitat of the island. Ongoing studies are focused on monitoring the recovery of the island and investigating the ecological effects of severe volcanic disturbances. The Kasatochi eruption has motivated research on how to better monitor activity at unmonitored volcanoes using regional seismic data.

## **About the Authors**

Chris Waythomas is a geologist with USGS-Alaska Volcano Observatory. He has a Ph.D. from the University of Colorado (1990) and has worked for USGS for 24 years and has 34 years experience in Alaska. His main areas of research are volcanic mass flows and the hazards they pose, volcano-ice interactions, and volcano geomorphology.

Stephanie Prejean is a geophysicist at the USGS Alaska Volcano Observatory in Anchorage, Alaska. Her research focuses on studying the physical processes that trigger earthquakes and using earthquakes to track the movement of magma and high-pressure fluids in the crust. She obtained her Ph.D. from Stanford University in 2002 and joined the Alaska Volcano Observatory in 2003.

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## **From the President's Desk ....**

We had some bad news that was quickly followed by some good news last month. The bad news is that Bill Morris, our President-elect, notified the board that he was transferring out of the state and would not be able to assume the office of President next year. The good news is that Ken Helmold, our current Vice President and Program Chair, has stepped forward to assume Bills role and will also continue to run the speaker program for the remainder of this year. All of the board members that I have received responses from wholeheartedly support this move, so I expect that we will confirm Ken as the new President-elect at the next board meeting on January 18. When you see Ken give him a very big thank you because after two very busy years of running our speaker program and technical conference he will move directly into running the society, rather than taking a relatively light year as President-elect.

Please note the Call for Volunteers for this May's PSAAPG Meeting that is included in this newsletter. Planning for the meeting is in full swing, with key volunteers getting together every other Wednesday to measure progress and hammer out what else needs to be done. If you are thinking of helping out, now is a good time to step forward and volunteer to be a session chair or a judge. Sandy Phillips should be able to provide you with some details about possible oral sessions, and Steve Wright should be able to assist on the poster sessions. The abstract deadline is February 11, and the sessions will be finalized soon after that date.

This month's talk is on the 2008 eruption of the Kasatochi volcano. It's always enjoyable when we get a talk from the AVO folks because every major volcanic event in the State always has its own interesting and unique story. Please join us at the BP Energy center on January 20.

**Tom**

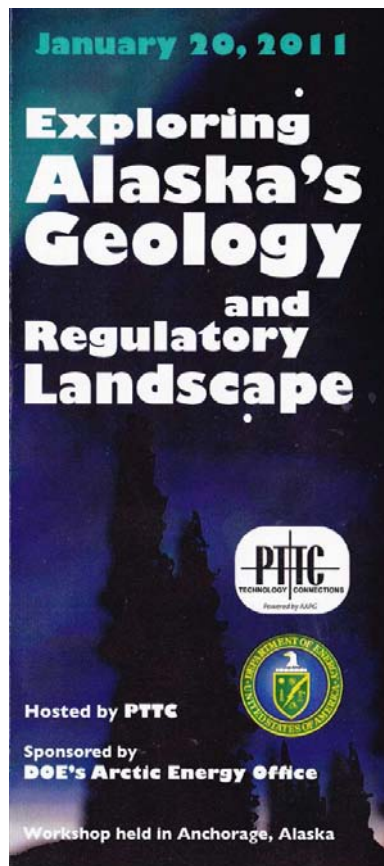
# LOCAL CLASS OFFERINGS

UAF will offer in Anchorage during the upcoming Spring semester:  
**Pete 205: Introduction to Drilling 5:30-6:30 Thursdays starting January 20th**  
**Pete 206: Introduction to Production 6:45-7:45 Thursdays starting January 20th**  
 The classes are offered back-to-back to target the same student audience for both classes.  
 Classes will be in the BP building, lobby conference room #134  
 Instructor is Robert B. "Bob" Coolidge with BP Exploration Alaska, Inc.  
 Registration and more information can be found on the UAF website:  
<http://www.alaska.edu/uaf/cem/pete/>

Catherine Hanks, Associate Professor and Chair, Petroleum Engineering, University of Alaska, Fairbanks will be teaching Pete 421/621--Reservoir Characterization --from Fairbanks via videoconference both in Anchorage and in Fairbanks. Classes will be on Tuesday/Thursday 11:30-1 pm, starting on Jan. 20.

Dr. Ning will be teaching Pete 630--Waterflooding--from Anchorage via videoconference both in Anchorage and in Fairbanks. Classes will be on Wednesdays 5:30-

8:30, starting on Jan 26.



**\* The workshop will be held January 20<sup>th</sup> the day before The Alliance's Meet Alaska Energy Conference on January 21<sup>st</sup> at the Sheraton Anchorage Hotel & Spa.**  
[alaskaalliance.com](http://alaskaalliance.com)


**The Alaska Geological Society**

**LUNCHEON SCHEDULE 2010 - 2011**

**Updates on the web at:**  
<http://www.alaskageology.org>

September 2010	Thurs., Sept. 16 <sup>th</sup> , David Scholl, USGS, Earthquake and Tsunami Hazards of the Aleutians
October 2010	Thursday, Oct. 21 <sup>st</sup> , Peter Haeussler, USGS Neo-tectonics of Cook Inlet
November 2010	Thursday, Nov. 18 <sup>th</sup> , Joann Welton, EXXON, Evaluating siliciclastic reservoir quality
December 2010	Thursday, Dec. 9 <sup>th</sup> – Alison Till, USGS, Reconstruction of Arctic Alaska
January 2011	Thursday, Jan. 20 <sup>th</sup> – Chris Waythomas, USGS AVO, Eruption of Kasatochi
February 2011	Thursday, Feb. 17 <sup>th</sup> , James Coleman, USGS, Tight-Gas Sandstone Reservoirs (AAPG Distinguished Lecturer)
March 2011	Thursday, March 17 <sup>th</sup> – Lisa Wirth, UAF Alaska Satellite Facility
April 2011	Thursday, April 21 <sup>st</sup> , Erik Hulm, BP Alaska, Heavy Oil of Alaska
May 2011	Thursday, May 19 <sup>th</sup> – Robert Swenson, DGGs, Energy development in Alaska

**If you would like to volunteer a talk or would like to suggest a speaker, please contact Ken Helmold at 269-8673**



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# Scholarships Available

Details on the next two pages

## Call for Proposals for AGS Scholarships

### Application Deadline

February 1, 2011 (midnight)

NOTE: All required forms are due at this time.

### Submit Form via Email:

Email all documents by midnight February 1, 2011 to:

[Robert Blodgett](mailto:robertbblodgett@yahoo.com) with the subject line "2011 AGS Scholarship"

Scholarship awardees will be notified prior to the April 2011 AGS luncheon.

### Questions?

Contact Robert Blodgett

907-646-1922 or 907-903-9222

Email: [robertbblodgett@yahoo.com](mailto:robertbblodgett@yahoo.com)

### Eligibility:

1. Enrollment at an accredited institute of higher education.
2. Status as a BA, BS, MS, or PhD candidate in geoscience or equivalent degree program.
3. Project or thesis/dissertation topic focused on Alaskan geology or related geoscience topic.
4. Having received the AGS Scholarship no more than two (2) times previously. Previous awardees shall be additionally required to provide the Scholarship committee with a summary of how previous funds were used.
5. Applicants for Alaska Geological Society scholarships may not be related to any member or to any family member of the Scholarship Committee or Board of Directors of the Society.

### Applications Should Include:

1. A **cover letter** describing your personal and educational career goals, your interest in the Earth Sciences, your financial need, and how you would use the scholarship funds.

The Alaska Geological Society offers scholarship awards to graduate and undergraduate students who are conducting geoscience research projects in Alaska

*including*

Alaska Geological Society Scholarships

The Don Richter Memorial Scholarship



Scholarship information and applications are available online at  
**[www.alaskageology.org](http://www.alaskageology.org)**

The Alaska Geological Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 101288

Anchorage, Alaska 99510

*The Alaska Geological Society is a 501c3 nonprofit organization*

*Donations to these scholarship funds are tax deductible*

Examples of how to apply the funds include, but are not limited to, field work, research/lab fees, or tuition and books. Please include your contact information in this letter (address, phone number, and email address). If you are a past scholarship recipient, please include an update on how you used previous AGS funding.

2. A **thesis proposal**, if you are a graduate student.
3. A minimum of **two letters of recommendation** from those familiar with your academic record. A third letter may be included if it contains important additional information.
4. A copy of your **transcripts** from your most recent institution.

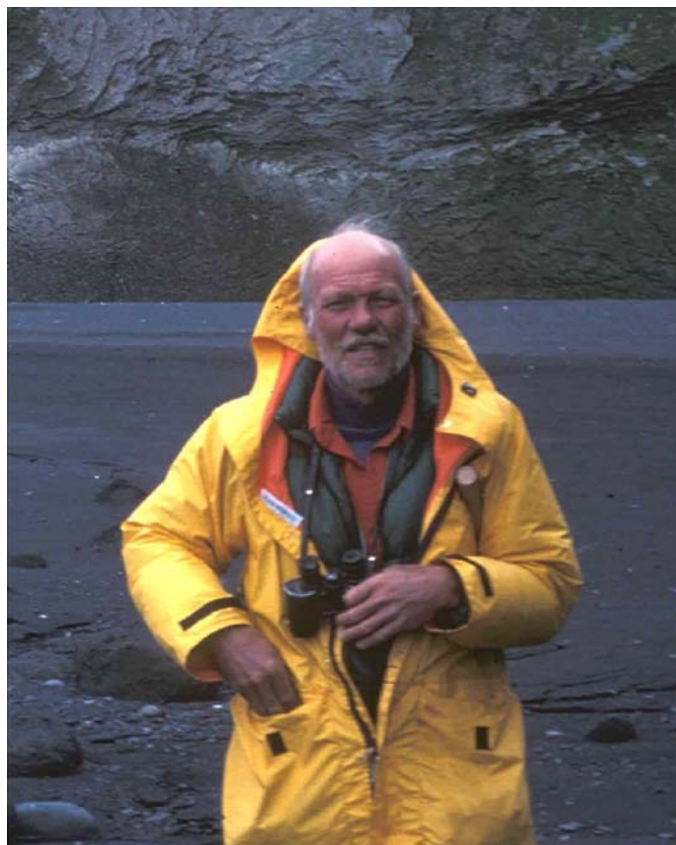
The AGS Scholarship Committee will take into account all facets of the information received. Priority will be given to those individuals whose thesis work is intended towards publication of results. An abstract (not exceeding 350 words) summarizing your final results should ultimately be submitted to AGS for publication in our monthly newsletter.

## Call for proposals for Richter Scholarship

The Alaska Geological Society's Don Richter Scholarship fund is requesting proposals for support of graduate student research. Proposals in all geology and geophysics disciplines related to work in Alaska are welcome, and proposals for research in the areas of Don's interests, including volcanology, igneous petrology, neotectonics, or studies in the Aleutian arc and Wrangell Mountains region are especially encouraged. The scholarship fund will award \$1500 to one proposal.

### Eligibility:

1. Enrollment at an accredited institute of higher education.
2. Status as a BA, BS, MS, or PhD candidate in geoscience or equivalent degree program.
3. Project or thesis/dissertation topic focused on Alaskan geology or related geoscience topic with a preference for topics that reflect Don Richter's career interests, including but not limited to: volcanology, igneous petrology, the Wrangell Mountains, the Aleutian arc, the Talkeetna arc, and the stratigraphy of south-central Alaska.
4. Having received the Richter Scholarship no more than one (1) time previously. Previous awardees shall be additionally required to provide the Scholarship committee with a summary of how previous funds were used.
5. Applicants for the Richter Scholarship may not be related to any member of the Richter family or to any person serving on the Scholarship Committee or the Board of Directors of the Society.



### Applications Should Include:

1. A **cover letter** describing your personal and educational career goals, your interest in the Earth Sciences, your financial need, and how you would use the scholarship funds. Examples of how to apply the funds include, but are not limited to, field work, research/lab fees, or tuition and books. Please include your contact information in this letter (address, phone number, and email address). If you are a past scholarship recipient, please include an update on how you used previous AGS funding.
2. A **thesis proposal**, if you are a graduate student.
3. A minimum of **two letters of recommendation** from those familiar with your academic record. A third letter may be included if it contains important additional information.
4. A copy of your **transcripts** from your most recent institution.

The AGS Scholarship Committee will take into account all facets of the information received. Priority will be given to those individuals whose thesis work is intended towards publication of results. An abstract (not exceeding 350 words) summarizing your final results should ultimately be submitted to AGS for publication in our monthly newsletter.

Application materials should be sent by February 1, 2011 to:

Richter Scholarship Committee  
Alaska Geological Society  
P.O. Box 101288  
Anchorage, AK 99510

Questions regarding scholarship applications may be directed to: Sue Karl at [skarl@usgs.gov](mailto:skarl@usgs.gov) or 907-786-7428. Awards will be announced March 1, 2011.

## Call for volunteers

### Your local organization needs your help!!!

The success of our locally-hosted upcoming Pacific Section AAPG – Western Region SPE meeting is dependant on securing volunteers in three key areas:

- Oral session chairs
- Poster session chairs
- Oral & poster session judges

Please contact one of the technical session chairs below to volunteer your time!

**Oral Session Chair:**

**Sandy Phillips** 907.564.4587 [sandra.phillips@bp.com](mailto:sandra.phillips@bp.com)

**Poster Session Chair:**

**Steve Wright** 907.263.7865 [sswr@chevron.com](mailto:sswr@chevron.com)

**Judging Coordinator:**

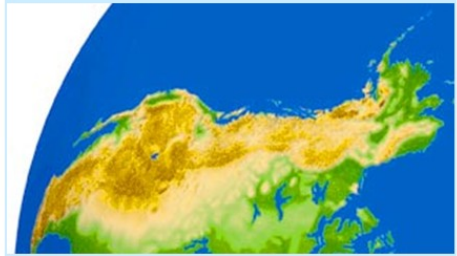
**Pete Barker** 907.248.7114 [pbarker@gci.net](mailto:pbarker@gci.net)

**Abstracts for all sessions due by February 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Abstract Submission Website:**

<http://aapg2011ps.abstractcentral.com>

## *Arctic to the Cordillera: Unlocking the Potential*



*Pacific section AAPG & Western Region SPE*

### **Technical Sessions: May 9-11, 2011 Anchorage, Alaska**

Conference Co-hosting Organizations  
Pacific Section American Association of  
Petroleum Geologists & Western Region of the  
Society of Petroleum Engineers

Supporting Organizations  
Pacific Section – Society of Sedimentary Geology  
Pacific Coast Section – Society of Exploration  
Geophysicists



Local Hosting Society  
Alaska Geological Society

The American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) Young Professionals is **currently looking for individuals interested in organizing and leading local chapters within the Pacific Section**. The chapter leads will be responsible for identifying other individuals to serve in leadership positions within the local chapters and participating on the Pacific Section Young Professionals Committee. Chapter leadership will be responsible for planning local activities such as networking events, field trips, volunteer efforts, student chapter outreach, etc. Chapter leads should be members of AAPG. If you are not a member and would like to participate, join AAPG and the Pacific Section (PSAAPG)!

Please contact Jon Allen by email [jonathan.allen@chevron.com](mailto:jonathan.allen@chevron.com) or phone (661) 664-7516 if you are interested or would like more information.

The mission of the AAPG Young Professionals is to foster a challenging and successful career in the energy business for recent college graduates and early career geoscientists (<10 years experience), and to build an understanding of the value of a lasting relationship between AAPG and young professional members. In order to accomplish these goals, we aim to provide open communication with students about careers in earth science, identify and serve the early career needs of young geoscientists, and offer opportunities for networking, career guidance, learning, and enhancing professional competence.

Thanks,

Jon Allen  
AAPG Young Professionals – Pacific Section

## Meeting Information

The **American Geological Institute** provides a comprehensive list of national and international geoscience meetings at: <http://calendar.agiweb.org>

### Local Meetings:

#### American Water Resources Association—Alaska Section

<http://www.awra.org/state/alaska/index.html>

#### Alaska Geological Society

<http://www.alaskageology.org>

Lunch meetings are held monthly September through May in Anchorage. For more information, contact Jim Clough, 451-5030.

#### Alaska Miners Association

<http://www.alaskaminers.org/>

The Anchorage branch of the AMA holds weekly meetings at 7 AM every Friday at the Denny's on Northern Lights and Denali. They hold regular luncheon meetings in association with SME. For more information, contact the AMA office at 563-9229.

#### American Institute of Professional Geologists

<http://www.aipg.org>

AIPG holds regular quarterly evening Section meetings in Anchorage and Fairbanks. For more information contact Mark Lockwood, President, at Shannon & Wilson, Inc., in Fairbanks, 907-458-3142.

#### Chugach Gem & Mineral Society

<http://www.chugachgms.org>

CG&MS holds all meetings at the First United Methodist Church on 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Contact their hotline at 566-3403 for information on regular monthly business meetings, monthly potlucks, and guidebook sales, including the new Alaska Rockhound Guidebook.

#### Geophysical Society of Alaska

<http://gsa.seg.org/>

Luncheon meetings are held monthly September through May at the ConocoPhillips Tower. For more information, contact Phil Rorison, 265-6321

#### Society of Petroleum Engineers

<http://alaska.spe.org/>

#### UAS Environmental Science Program

<http://www.uas.alaska.edu/envs>

#### National Association of Geology Teachers (NAGT)

<http://www.nagt>

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On the web at: <http://www.alaskageology.org>

The Alaska Geological Society is an organization which seeks to promote interest in and understanding of Geology and the related Earth Sciences, and to provide a common organization for those individuals interested in geology and the related Earth Sciences.

This newsletter is the monthly (September-May) publication of the Alaska Geological Society, Inc. Number of newsletters/month: ~300

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(907) 263-4748 (office)

### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

AGS annual memberships expire November 1. The annual membership fee is \$20/year. You may download a membership application from the AGS website and return it at a luncheon meeting, or mail it to the address above.

Contact membership coordinator Greg Wilson with changes or updates (e-mail: [gregory.c.wilson@conocophillips.com](mailto:gregory.c.wilson@conocophillips.com); phone: 907-263-4690)

All AGS publications are now available for on-line purchase on our website. Check to see the complete catalogue.

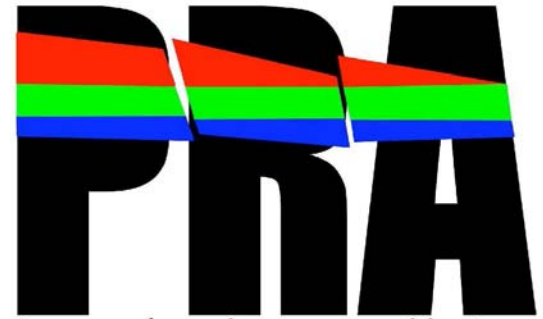
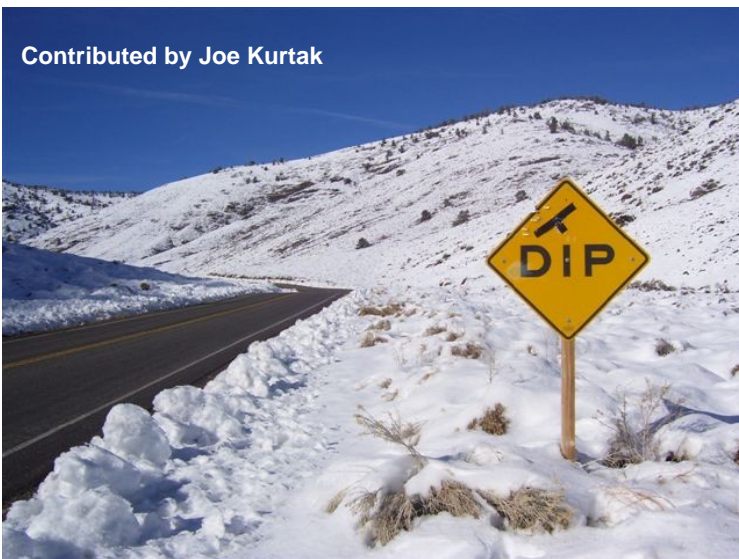
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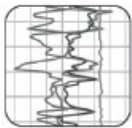
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Note: e-mail addresses now contain "at" instead of "@" Please change to @ when typing.

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