

Geology education in grades 1-12: you reap what you sow

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The shrinking number of job opportunities for geologists in the last decade has been the major reason for the negative attitude pervading the profession and for reduced involvement in extracurricular activities. One possible spinoff has been the relatively minor role of the Atlantic Geoscience Society in providing support to teachers. There have been some worthy projects and some committed individuals but the overall impact has not been as great as originally per-

ceived. Should we let matters continue in this direction, perhaps with the continued low key production of highway maps, videos and video guides? Or do we need to do more?

Here are some of the initiatives that seem to hold promise if we wish to enhance the role of geology in general education. Several geologists are becoming directly involved with education in our schools by working with the teachers. This involvement may be through classroom visits, talks,

demonstrations, or field trips. It may be through organization of workshops for teachers. It may be through the development of Internet and WWW services. Or it may be the unique Resident Scientist program.

Whatever we do demands familiarity with existing curricula and willingness to provide support when asked. There is a need to encourage students to continue their scientific education, to appreciate the role of the earth sciences in everyday life and to be better equipped to address environ-

mental concerns. By becoming involved, and passing on the process on some of our knowledge, we can rekindle our own enthusiasm and make geology as exciting to the children as it is to us. We should share our experiences so that we can benefit from our successes and learn from our failures. But, most importantly, let's reverse the charge on our negative attitudes so that we have a positive and lasting effect on geological education in schools.