

The Parrsboro EdGEO Workshop

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The 1999 Nova Scotia EdGEO Workshop was held at the Fundy Museum in Parrsboro, 23-24 August. The committee, benefiting from experience with the previous five EdGEO Workshops, provided a full two days of hands-on activities plus field trips. The focus of the Monday morning sessions was on rocks, minerals and time, with emphasis on Nova Scotia. The highlight was the Chocolate Chip Cookie activity, an exercise which tests the resourcefulness of the players in developing a mine and returning the land to its natural state after exhaustion of the resources. Another activity was where do we find minerals in our everyday life? There were some interesting surprises, with few realizing that bread, toothpaste and wallboard all contain gypsum. The concept of geological time was explained by a time line comprising a series of cards. These illustrate when different animal and plant groups originated, helping teachers to remember both the order of appearance and the time. One intriguing discovery was that herbivorous dinosaurs did not eat grass.

Monday afternoon provided a change of pace with a field trip to Joggins and Jeffers Brook. This trip from Africa to North America included a stop at Kirkhill where the

Cobequid-Chedabucto Fault is visible for miles as it parallels the Bay of Fundy coastline. The evening utilized the fascination of the Fundy Museum with a talk on the dinosaurs of Nova Scotia, followed by a tour of the preparation rooms and gallery displays.

The emphasis on Tuesday morning switched to the Net and Fossils, a somewhat eclectic mix. The advantages of the EarthNet website were readily apparent when teachers accessed lesson plans and activity sheets on such diverse topics as volcanoes, time and dinosaurs. The fossil session primarily reviewed plant and animal evolution, using where possible examples from Nova Scotia. Thus, it was possible to mention some of the reptiles found at Joggins, such as *Hylonomus* (the forest mouse).

For the first time, the Workshop did not conclude at noon on Tuesday. Instead there was a field trip to Wasson Bluff to view the Late Triassic-Early Jurassic rocks and to search for vertebrate bones.

Was the Parrsboro Workshop a success? The 26 teachers certainly thought so, judging from some of the comments on the evaluation sheets. These included the following:

“presenters excellent and informative”, “great learning environment”, “loved the blend of teaching/learning styles”, “I have attended many workshops – this has been the best”, “The material was exceptional”. One of the most rewarding aspects

of the workshop was that there was a waiting list, so that already there are several reservations for EdGEO 2000 in Antigonish.