



EARTH SCIENCE WEEK 2017 Celebrating Two Decades

By Geoff Camphire

Earth science educators and others around the world are marking the 20th annual celebration of Earth Science Week by exploring on the theme “Earth and Human Activity.” New theme-related resources, activities, and programs are promoting public understanding of the geosciences and stewardship the planet, especially in terms of the ways people interact with Earth systems.

Such interactions can be seen in energy, technology, climate change, the environment, natural disasters, industry, agriculture, recreation, tourism, and other areas. Throughout Earth Science Week 2017 (October 8-14), teachers, students, and others worldwide will begin their exploration online. Earth Science Week, organized by the American Geosciences Institute (AGI), hosts a website (www.earthsciweek.org) that offers many instructional resources, ideas, and activities for you to use.

New This Year

For the first time, Earth Science Week is connecting educators with the world’s widest collection of Earth science curricula, classroom activities, teacher professional development opportunities, science education standards, virtual field trips, teaching ancillaries, and more. Check out the Education Resources Network of AGI’s Center for Geoscience & Society. The free geoscience education resources featured on this site, provided by a variety of sources, are available at the click of a mouse. To visit the Education Resources Network, simply go to the Earth Science Week homepage and click on “Resources” link.

Also this year, Earth Science Week Citywide Celebrations will take place in Houston, Denver, and (in December) the Washington, D.C. area, including special events and kit donations to local schools. Aligned with these events, AGI staff will take part in Energy Day Festival events in Houston and Denver.

Under a new price structure, copies of the Earth Science Week 2017 Toolkit are free and available for the cost of shipping and handling. This year’s toolkit includes dozens of items, such as the Earth Science Activity Calendar, an attractive wall calendar that features an activity for each month of the school year. The calendar provides a great way explore the celebration of “Earth and Human

Activity” throughout the 2017-18 school year and beyond. (To receive the toolkit, order online or call 703-379-2480.)

Cool Contests

AGI is sponsoring its four traditional contests in visual arts, essay writing, video production, and photography. As always, students, geoscientists, and the general public are invited to participate in the photo contest. For the “Earth and Human Activity Here” contest, entries must be composed of original, unpublished material, and show ways people affect, or are affected by, Earth systems in their local communities.

What’s more, the contest features a new twist. Earth Science Week presents the “Earth and Human Activity Here” Photo Map, located on the program website. Select entries will be featured on the map, linked to the location of origin. This new resource is intended to provide an educational resource, showing “crowdsourced” examples of human interaction with natural systems.



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Contests offer opportunities for everyone. This year’s visual arts contest, “People and the Planet,” is open to students in kindergarten through grade five. Essays by older students must address the idea of “Human Interaction With Earth Systems.” And AGI invites people of all ages to enter the “Earth Connections” video contest by submitting a brief, original video that tells viewers how people affect Earth systems, or how Earth systems affect people, in their part of the world.

Your Vital Role

To lead a hands-on geoscience activity, simply search the Earth Science Week website’s collection of more than 120 learning activities that support the Next Generation Science Standards. Find the perfect activity for a lesson by clicking on “Search Classroom Activities.” Search by grade level and science education standard. Maybe most useful, you can search among 24 categories of Earth Science topics, from energy and environment to plate tectonics and weathering.

Also, you can take part in activities emphasizing various areas of the geosciences during “Focus Days.” For example, activities on Earth Observation Day, Tuesday, October 10, engage students and teachers in remote sensing as an exciting and powerful educational tool. National Fossil Day, focusing on paleontology, takes place at schools, parks, and other sites across the country on Wednesday, October 11. On Friday, October 13, celebrate Geologic Map Day, which promotes awareness of the importance of geologic mapping for education, science, business, and policy. And Saturday, October 14, caps Earth Science Week with the celebration of International Archaeology Day.

AGI reaches over 50 million people annually through the Earth Science Week campaign. You can play an essential part. Earth science educators have provided the leadership for Earth Science Week since its inception in 1998!

About the Author

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