

Committee of Provincial Geologists Chairperson's Report 2002

The Committee of Provincial Geologists (CPG) is a national organization composed of representatives from the provincial and territorial geological surveys in Canada. These organizations are the principal suppliers of geoscience information in their respective jurisdictions, principally to the mineral and petroleum industries, other government departments, and the public.

The Committee provides an opportunity to exchange information on topics of common interest and concern. The Committee maintains close ties with its federal counterpart, the Geological Survey of Canada, through the National Geological Surveys Committee (NGSC). Such exchanges help insure that geoscience activities in Canada are conducted in a coordinated and collaborative manner, providing maximum benefit for the users of geoscience information.

The CPG held two regular meetings during 2002. The first took place in Toronto, in conjunction with the annual convention of the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada. The second meeting was held in Winnipeg, in September, in conjunction with the annual Mines and Energy Ministers Conference. The CPG meetings were followed by NGSC meetings with federal partners.

Key Issues

The challenge to fund the activities of geoscience surveys, particularly mapping, continues to be a major concern of most provincial and territorial surveys (Fig 1). The need for this data has been well documented by the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) at recent Mines Ministers meetings. In its brief to the 2001 Energy and Mines Ministers Conference, the PDAC suggested that an additional \$18.8 million above current budget levels was required annually to address inadequacies in the bedrock and surficial mapping databases across Canada. CPG will be working with the GSC in 2003 and beyond to develop a plan for new mapping (see Cooperative Geoscience Mapping Strategy below).

A second ongoing issue has been finding

ways to deliver more geoscience data to our clients over the Internet. While many of the provincial and territorial geological surveys are making effective use of their websites, the limited resources in some jurisdictions severely limit their on-line capabilities. Limited resources make it especially difficult for some to participate in national initiatives to make the geoscience data holdings of the federal, provincial and territorial agencies interoperable. Despite these constraints, all jurisdictions are participating in the Canadian Geoscience Knowledge Network initiative. (see below).

An emerging issue for most provincial and territorial surveys arises from an increasing societal need for critical earth science information and advice about such things as groundwater, geohazards, energy and climate change. While the professional expertise resident in the geological surveys is capable of delivering this information and advice, the addition of these non-traditional activities and services further strains their limited operating budgets.

New issues for the CPG revolve around the GSC's shift to an issues-based program. As Canada's major funding agency for geoscience studies, any redirection of the GSC's focus has impacts on the larger geoscience community. Given the recognized need for more geoscience field surveys supporting the mine-discovery process, CPG will need to continue to clearly

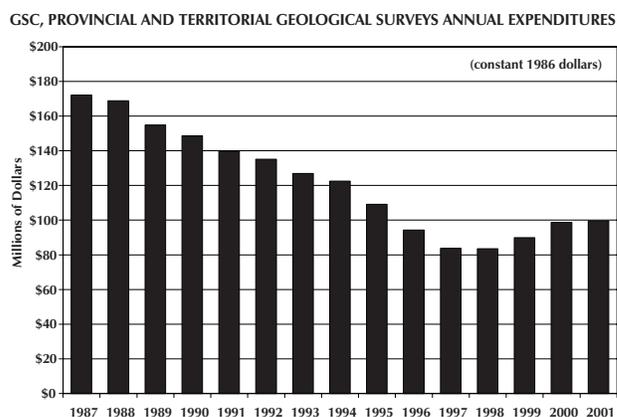


Figure 1: Government geoscience spending in Canada, 1987-2001.

demonstrate proven benefits of geoscience information to society.

Intergovernmental Geoscience Accord

The Intergovernmental Geoscience Accord (IGA) establishes the various roles and responsibilities for the provincial, territorial and federal geological surveys in Canada. The first five-year agreement was signed in 1996 and expired in September 2001. The Accord was an explicit example of the how the two levels of government had increased their level of co-operation during the late 1980s and early 1990s. A number of major joint programs were carried out during the first IGA, including the National Mapping Program and the Targeted Geoscience Initiative. The NGSC agreed to extend for an additional year the principles and mechanisms for cooperation outlined in the IGA, and in March 2002 developed the final text for a new agreement. The second IGA was signed in Winnipeg on September 16, 2002 by Minister Dhaliwal (Natural Resources Canada) and Minister Mihychuk (Manitoba Industry, Trade and Mines), representing all signatory jurisdictions.

Geological Survey of Canada issues-driven Program process

In March 2002 the GSC introduced an 'issues-driven' project approval process. Earth Science Sector (ESS) will focus on issues and priorities important to the federal government. In doing so, ESS will work directly with many provincial and territorial departments and agencies other than those responsible for geological surveys. As outlined in the new IGA, every effort will be made to keep provincial and territorial geological surveys informed of ESS/GSC activities within their respective jurisdictions.

Workshops were held in June and September to outline two Programs of particular interest to CPG, namely the "Northern Resources Development" (NRD) and "Consolidating Canada's Geoscience Knowledge" (CCGK) programs. Effective and timely communication with the GSC was deemed by CPG members to be of utmost importance in the new issues-driven process. At the September program workshops in Winnipeg, CPG representatives were named to the steering committees of the CCGK (Mike Cherry) and NRD (Ric Syme) programs, in an effort to facilitate communication

between the programs and CPG.

In November 2002, permanent program managers replaced interim program managers for ESS Programs; these included Dave Scott for the NRD Program and Mark Williamson for the CCGK program.

Canadian Geoscience Knowledge Network (CGKN)

CGKN is a diverse, complex, multi-agency project designed to make the geoscience holdings of Canada's geological survey agencies interoperable and Internet accessible. This requires building and adopting national standards and schema for data collection and exchange. At the same time, member agencies are focusing most of their information technology efforts and resources on developing and populating their own Internet sites and digitizing their extensive analogue geoscience holdings.

Ron Smyth was contracted by the GSC to undertake a review of CGKN and reported to CPG and NGSC at their September 2002 meetings. His message was that CGKN may be trying to do too much, too quickly, and that existing high-priority projects should be completed before scarce resources are committed to embarking on ambitious new projects. CPG engagement in CGKN is to be strengthened through a workshop at PDAC 2003, bringing CGKN technical staff and CPG managers together to establish visions and goals for the program. CPG's CGKN Champion, Mike Cherry, facilitates communication between the CGKN Secretariat and CPG.

Cooperative Geoscience Mapping Strategy

In September 2000 the federal, provincial and territorial ministers of Mines endorsed the document "*Cooperative Geological Mapping Strategies across Canada*", prepared by the NGSC. Implementation of the *Strategies* required the infusion of new money for geoscience at both federal and jurisdictional levels. Since 2000, the federal government has been unable to earmark new funding for CGMS. In the provinces and territories, the ability to obtain new geoscience funding based on the CGMS premise has been mixed, with the majority able simply to maintain existing funding.

The Cooperative Geological Mapping Strategies (CGMS) is now, within the GSC's issues-driven process, linked with the program "Consolidating Canada's Geoscience Knowledge". An implementation plan to advance the CGMS will be prepared under this program, co-authored with CPG. This plan will be founded on a two-fold assessment: 1) what past federal and provincial investments in geoscience studies have returned, and 2) what key geoscience and other knowledge gaps continue to exist as inhibitors to mineral and energy resource-based economic growth in Canada. The assessment will be based on information supplied through other CCGK projects and through active consultations with partners. The CGMS plan will be produced through close interaction between ESS and the provinces and territories.

Targeted Geoscience Initiative

The Targeted Geoscience Initiative is a Federal program that brought \$5 million a year for geoscience studies for three years (1999-2002) to stimulate new investment in mineral exploration in Canada. The provincial and territorial geological surveys are the federal government's key partners in this initiative and all TGI projects have been carried out in accordance with principles set out in the Intergovernmental Geoscience Accord. The new funding was augmented by \$8 million from GSC's appropriation and \$19 million from partners over the three years, resulting in a total program expenditure of \$42 million. TGI has funded 29 projects, selected following assessment against a set of common criteria. TGI has also supported the Online Data Catalogue project of the Canadian Geoscience Knowledge Network.

With the end of this program, it would appear that the GSC's expenditures on field surveys may drop dramatically, unless the Federal Government develops a new initiative outside of their issues-driven program.

National Groundwater Strategy

The Canadian Framework for Collaboration on Groundwater forms a basis for securing the fundamental information necessary to manage and protect Canada's groundwater resource. The Framework structure will provide immediate access to current science and technology in support of policy design. The Framework respects jurisdictional responsibilities of each order of government in all provinces and territo-

ries of Canada. It also recognizes the contribution of universities, industry and other stakeholders.

Following the recommendations put forth through the national workshops, a proposed mechanism for co-ordination and collaboration within the framework initiative was centred on a Canadian Groundwater Advisory Council (CGAC). This council would be formed of the primary groups having interests and roles in the management of groundwater in Canada. CGAC will advise a Federal-Provincial Groundwater Committee (FPGC). This committee will be formed of representatives from provincial governments, federal government and the Yukon. The main mandate of this committee will be the implementation of the national co-operative programs and guidelines. This committee will have strong links to government and it will have links to the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment and the National Geological Surveys Committee. The Intergovernmental Geoscience Accord is considered the official vehicle to manage and disseminate groundwater knowledge that will be produced by CGAC.

British Columbia Geological Survey Situation

The BC government's decision to downsize the British Columbia Geological Survey has the potential to negatively impact all geological surveys. Individual surveys across Canada have been urged to devise ways in which to better position geoscience with government decision-makers and to engage non-traditional stakeholders.

Ron Smyth presented a summary of the downsizing process and outcomes at the March 2002 CPG meeting. He indicated that four important lessons for geological surveys were learned from the downsizing exercise: 1) develop better linkages between the work of the surveys and the exploration and discovery process; 2) document success stories; 3) develop partnerships; and 4) a survey with a solid reputation for quality service is not immune to radical cuts.

Following staffing changes announced in November 2002 the BCGS is left with 21 staff positions focussing on collecting new field data and maintaining databases and the MapPlace.

Changes to CPG

Ron Smyth and Rao Irrinki both left CPG this year, after contributing many years to advancing geoscience in British Columbia and New Brunswick, respectively. Both brought considerable insight and experience to CPG, and we wish both Ron and Rao well in their new endeavours.

Rao Irrinki retired from his position of Director of the New Brunswick Geological Surveys Branch in March 2002. Rao was employed by the Geological Surveys Branch for 31 years. During these years Rao conducted bedrock mapping in northern and central New Brunswick, conducted Mineral Deposit studies on several metallic mineral deposits, and implemented a Geoscience Information System. Rao became acting director of the Geological Surveys Branch in 1996 and Director in 1997.

Ron Smyth began his BC public service career in 1982 as a Senior Geologist with the British Columbia Geological Branch. He was appointed Chief Geologist in 1984, and was the Director of the Ministry's Geological Survey Branch prior to his leaving. Effective October 1, 2002 Ron assumed a new role in the Ministry, as Chief Science Officer with the Offshore Oil and Gas Branch.

Les Fyffe was appointed the new Director of the New Brunswick Geological Surveys Branch effective October 1, 2002, and will represent New Brunswick on CPG.

Dave Lefebure, Acting Director/Chief Geologist of the BC Geological Survey Branch, replaced Ron Smyth as British Columbia's CPG representative.

Bernie MacLean, in his position as Manager of the C.S. Lord Northern Geoscience Centre in Yellowknife, has replaced Carolyn Relf as the CPG representative for the Northwest Territories.

Dave Scott, CPG representative for Nunavut, was assigned in November 2002 to lead ESS's Northern Resource Development Program. Dave stepped aside as Chief Geologist of the Canada-Nunavut Geoscience Office in order to fulfil his new responsibilities. Nunavut's representation on CPG will continue to be the responsibility of the Chief Geologist of the Can-

ada-Nunavut Geoscience Office, a role to be performed on an acting basis by members of the Office staff until a longer-term assignment can be made.

Provincial Geologists Medal

The 2002 Provincial Geologists Medal was awarded to Dr Trygve Hoy of British Columbia. The medal was presented during the 2002 Energy and Mines Ministers Conference in Winnipeg by Manitoba's Minister Mihychuk, at a wrap-up dinner at Fort Gibraltar. Congratulations to both Dr Hoy and the BC Geological Survey Branch for providing exceptional service through a long career.

Provincial Geologists Journal

CPG appreciates the dedication of Brian Grant and Dave Lefebure of the British Columbia Geological Survey in the work that they have accomplished in assembling the Provincial Geologists Journal.

Ric Syme
2002 *Chairman*