

# **South Dakota Section of AIPG Annual Meeting April 15, 2026 Meeting Minutes**

The meeting was in person and via Teams and presided over by the current Section President Foster Sawyer. The meeting was located at the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Office, 221 Mall Drive, Suite #201, Rapid City, SD. The meeting started at 4:08 pm. (MDT).

## **Meeting attendees are as follows:**

1. Foster Sawyer (Section President); Professor Emeritus, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology and Faculty/Research Scientist, Oglala Lakota College
2. Mark Nelson (Section President-Elect); Barrick Mining
3. Tim Cowman (Past Section President); South Dakota Geological Survey
4. Gary Haag (Section Secretary-Treasurer); Retired (U.S, Forest Service)
5. Tom Durkin (Section Screening Chair-Web Editor); Retired (South Dakota School of Mines & Technology Space Grant Program)
6. Brian Fagnan, South Dakota Geological Survey
7. Joanne Noyes, Retired, (South Dakota Geological Survey)
8. Ali Vinke, South Dakota Geological Survey
9. Matt Hicks, SD Dept. of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Water Quality Program
10. Joy Lester (via Teams), Lester Consulting
11. Mark Fahrenbach, Retired (South Dakota Geological Survey)
12. Christopher Pellowski (via Teams), South Dakota School of Mines & Technology

## **Items Discussed**

### 1. Introductions

- Foster Sawyer requested that since we had some new people at the meeting, we all introduced ourselves.

### 2. Approval of the meeting agenda

- Tim Cowman made a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Second by Gary Haag. Motion carried.

### 3. Approval of minutes from 2025 annual meeting

- Foster Sawyer asked if there were any questions about the 2025 annual meeting minutes. Hearing none the 2025 annual meeting minutes were approved with a motion by Tom Durkin; second by Ali Vinke. Motion carried.

### 4. Section Officer Reports

- Foster Sawyer (Section President); No Report

Foster will transition to Past President at the end of today's meeting (term expires in 2028).

- Mark Nelson (Section President-Elect):

Mark reported he received an e-mail from Kayla Casey, Membership Administrator at AIPG headquarters. The e-mail concerned students who applied for but did not receive a national scholarship. Zoe Dodd (SDSM&T Student) was on this list and Ms. Casey was asking if we would like to sponsor a scholarship for her. After a short discussion we decided we would not sponsor a scholarship for Zoe Dodd in 2026, but would continue our schedule of awarding Section scholarships every other year. The next request for scholarship applications will be sent out in early 2027.

(**Note:** Mark responded to Ms. Casey via e-mail on April 17, 2026 concerning our decision not fund a scholarship for Zoe Dodd this year.)

Mark will transition to President at the end of today's meeting (term expires in 2028).

- Tim Cowman (Section Past President): No Report

Tim's term as Past President expires at the end of today's meeting. We thank Tim for his service and support of the South Dakota Section as the State Geologist. We look forward to Tim's support in the future.

- Gary Haag (Section Secretary-Treasurer): The South Dakota Section bank account balances are as follows:

Account balances as of 03/31/2026:

I. Checking:	\$2,920.30
ii. <u>Savings:</u>	<u>\$5,103.11</u>
Total:	\$8,023.41

Included in above total:

- i. Savings account interest: \$0.64 (Since January 1, 2026)

Not included in above total:

- i. At the time of the meeting, we had not received the 2026 section dues (\$20.00 per member) from AIPG Headquarters. The dues are direct deposited into the Section bank account.

Expenses (2025):

	WordPress Subscription:	\$161.42 (Subscription is for 2 years)*
i.	Fieldtrip:	\$167.18 (Food/Paper products)*
ii.	Scholarships:	<u>\$1,500.00</u> (Cassidy Ewing \$1000.00/Zoe Dodd \$500.00)
	Total:	\$1,828.60

\* (**Note:** These items were paid for using our Black Hills Federal Credit Union credit card, which has a \$500.00 credit limit.)

Tax Report (2025):

- I. The tax report is required by AIPG headquarters as part of their group filing of Form 990 to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This information is submitted to the IRS on an annual basis

and includes income and expenses for each AIPG Section.

Motion to approve Treasurer's report made by Mark Nelson. Second by Tim Cowman. Motion carried.

- Tom Durkin (Section Screening Chair-Website Editor); Tom discussed how the website setup has changed. He has divided the awards page into three headings: J.P. Gries Geologist of the Year Award, student scholarship award and AIPG section leadership and other awards. Tom will also be posting annual Section meeting agendas and minutes. He also mentioned that with the new website you can see how many people visit the site. The annual cost for the website is \$148.95, but thanks to Tom's research he found that for an additional \$12.47 the subscription can be extended to 2 years. This is a substantial cost savings for the Section!

Another issue Tom discussed is the condition of the interpretive sign the section erected near Rockerville, SD along U.S. Highway 16 in 2013. The sign is deteriorating due to the weather and needs replacement. Nuri Uzunlar from the SDSM&T has funds available to pay for a new sign. Tom will contact the company that originally printed sign about getting it reprinted. Another issue is the current out of date QR Code that is on the sign. Tom Durkin and Tim Cowman will work on what options are available for an updated QR Code on the new sign.

## 5. Old Business

- Foster discussed the September 27, 2025 section fieldtrip to Gold Mountain led by Dr. Perry Rahn. After the fieldtrip Dr. Rahn was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Section at the cookout following the fieldtrip. Sadly Dr. Rahn passed away on January 15, 2026 in Rapid City, SD. Foster submitted for publication a memoriam for Dr. Rahn in *The Professional Geologist* magazine. In addition, Foster did a tribute to Dr. Rahn at the April 16<sup>th</sup> 2026 Western South Dakota Environmental and Hydrology Conference in Rapid City, SD.

## 6. New Business

- Election of Officers: With Mark Nelson transitioning to Section President, we needed to elect a new President-Elect at this annual meeting. A couple of nominations were made by the meeting attendees, but those nominated declined. However, Joy Lester who was at the meeting via Teams volunteered to be President-Elect. Her self-nomination was passed unanimously by those present at the meeting.
- AIPG National Conference: The National AIPG Conference will be held in in Duluth, Minnesota from August 29-September 1, 2026. The title for this year's conference is, "**Four Billion Years Beneath Our Feet**". It did not appear that anyone at the meeting will be attending the conference. For those interested in attending the conference information is available at: <https://aipg.org>.
- J.P. Gries Award: There was one nomination for this year's award, Joanne Noyes, retired professional geologist and engineer who worked for SD DANR (previously SD DENR) in the Ground Water Quality Program and Geological Survey. Joanne was nominated by Foster Sawyer and Tim Cowman. Joanne was presented with this well-deserved award at the annual meeting. To read her nomination letter go to the Section website at: <https://sd-aipg.org/j-p-gries-geologist-of-the-year-award/>

- Section Field Trip Ideas for 2026: Foster had several suggestions for a 2026 fieldtrip which are listed on the attached meeting agenda. After some discussion we decided on the Box Elder Creek trip which will involve looking at the geology along Nemo Road (Precambrian and Paleozoic rocks, the hydrology of the area and a hike through the Maze). Foster also offered to have a cookout at his residence after the fieldtrip. Foster also suggested making a concerted effort to invite students and faculty from SDSM&T.
- Section Membership: Foster discussed membership status for our Section, we have a total of 36 section members, which includes 2 new Certified Professional Geologists, 1 new member and 10 student members of which 3 are new. Tim Cowman supplied the table below which shows members that were on the roles in 2025 and not shown on the membership roles in 2026. It also shows new members for 2026. It was suggested that a section officer contact those members who have not renewed.

**Who's only in each list**

**Only in 2025 (not found in 2026)**

- Anthony Petres
- C. Milligan
- Donald Basko
- Paul Christensen
- Perry Rahn
- Robert Townsend
- Tyler Myrman

**Only in 2026 (not found in 2025)**

- Ali Vinke
- Isaac Bondzie-Selby
- Macy Sager
- Marc Macy
- Matthew Hicks
- Zachariah Faulkner

- AIPG Booth at Western South Dakota Environmental and Hydrology Conference, April 16, 2026: Mark Nelson, Foster Sawyer, Tom Durkin and Gary Haag volunteered to staff the booth at the conference. The conference was a great success with over 250 attendees. We spoke to many people at the booth and may have recruited a couple of new members. We also gave away a lot of swag!



(Note: AIPG Headquarters pays the conference booth fee and supplies the booth materials at no cost to the section.)

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Foster Sawyer. Second by Gary Haag. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:16 pm (MDT).

Respectfully submitted by:

*Gary H. Haag*

Secretary-Treasurer  
South Dakota Section of AIPG

Attachment: April 15, 2026 Annual Meeting Agenda