

NWRA Sponsorship and Attendance at UNLV GeoSymposium

By Karin Peternel

Ichnofossils, anyone? Water on early mars? An ancient hidden reservoir? These are just a few of the topics presented and the research conducted by our peers and future scientists at the UNLV Department of Geoscience's 14th Annual GeoSymposium on April 26, 2019. Representing NWRA at this event, I thought that maybe I've been "out of the academic game" for a while, because I was amazed at the level of technical detail and complexity of the research projects presented. While discussing this thought with one of the many engaging professors with whom I spoke, I was told that no, I haven't been out of the game, that these students really are amazing. With topics from an assessment of gold resources, to the application of Raman quartz-in-garnet barometry, my attention was captured by these highly intelligent undergraduate and graduate students. Keynote speaker Colby Pellegrino (SNWA) spoke of these students as the future of our science, and future policy makers who understand the science. "Scientific results do not exist unless they are communicated," Ms. Pellegrino stated, and forums such as this GeoSymposium allow us to see and appreciate the future. I spoke with many students enthusiastic to talk about their research, as well as the encouraging and supportive faculty members. This event showcased these bright, dedicated students intent on expanding knowledge and research in the earth sciences fields, and this event was a great opportunity to expand our NWRA footprint and reach out to students in southern Nevada.

The enthusiasm demonstrated by the students while discussing and presenting their research is a reminder that we were all students at one time, excited about our own work, and how much we appreciated when people took an interest in our work and attended our presentations. We, as individuals and as NWRA, should continue to make efforts to engage in outreach in both northern and southern Nevada. Nevada's hydrologic and earth sciences programs have student chapter events that we should continue to support, in addition to thesis defense and other student resource events that we can attend.

Thanks to Michael Strange for his logistical support to NWRA and success at organizing an excellent program and well-coordinated event. Matthew Lachniet, the faculty advisor for the GeoSymposium, thanked NWRA for our support of these students through this event, with great ideas on how they and NWRA can work together to inform the students on how to learn more about the industry, how they can be involved in our organization, as well as provide guidance on the transition between school and a career. I am excited that NWRA had the opportunity to sponsor and attend this event, and look forward to a continued relationship with students and faculty at UNLV. I had great interest of support from faculty to help establish more of a relationship with these peers, especially in light of our next annual conference location of Las Vegas (February 10-13, 2020). And – poster judges beware!! I made sure the students knew about our poster contest, and they were excited to get the feedback from the judges from this event in order to make any improvements to their posters in hopes of presenting them at our conference. A good idea we can take from this event is that two poster sessions were provided to allow for the multitude of posters presented without being too overwhelming to the judges. Very deserving students were given awards for their posters and presentations, and research grants were awarded by the generous sponsors.

After attending this event, I see an opportunity for NWRA to help provide outreach to students on the transition from school to the real world, with support from many faculty members willing to facilitate this endeavor. I would like to personally thank all of the students and faculty who made me feel welcome and made a special point to express their appreciation for NWRA's sponsorship of this event. I have already had follow-up contact with attendees, and look forward to seeing them again and enjoying their research to get my mind "in the academic game" again.

Link to this year's program: <https://geoscience.unlv.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/14th-GeoSymposium-Program-C.pdf>

Facebook page with Thank You by Michael Strange:

<https://www.facebook.com/UNLVGeoSymposium/photos/pb.1492567904361465.-2207520000.1556641640./2333455746939339/?type=3&theater>