Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys
Geologic Mapping Advisory Board – Winter Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 30, 2026, from 9:00 am – 2:30 pm
3354 College Road, Fairbanks, AK – Basement Conference Room
3651 Penland Parkway, Anchorage, AK – GMC Large Conference Room

CONVENE Morning Session (Chair) **9:00 am**

- Call to order
- Review and approve agenda – Approved without objection
- Review and approve previous meeting minutes – Approved without objection,
- Roll call - Present: Matthew Hanson, Doug Kreiner, Russell Kirkham, Scott Digert, Nic Kinsman, Caixia Wang, Kyle Brennan, Rob Retherford, Mischa Ellanna

New Business **9:04 am**

- Introductions and DGGS news
  Director E. Campbell gave an overview of USGS funded programs, division's general fund, and highlights within the division. Governor's proposed budget for the division included no match for STATEMAP or Earth MRI. Exhibited other ways STATEMAP could still be covered. DNR Budget presented to the Legislature January 30th.
  J. Athey gave an operations update on FY2027 Governor's proposed budget and successful recruitments. Governor's amended FY2027 budget anticipated February 18th.

N. Kinsman: I would be interested in a future GMAB meeting to see a breakdown of where the federal funds are coming from by program and agency. I think it would be helpful to get an idea of how DGGS is going to leverage the added authority. We could potentially advise on how to preserve the authority that's been established.
J. Athey: We get questions from the legislature and the commissioner's office about that too. It would be good for us to have that information compiled

- DGGS Admin
  S. Zastrow introduced the administrative team and gave a summary of what they do.

- Hydrology and Surficial Geology
  J. Buscher: Presented three of the section's focus areas: surficial mapping, hydrology, and lidar. Reflected on the contributions to West Susitna STATEMAP, Yukon River Crossing and the ASTAR program, which collaborates with other departments and agencies. Discussed 2025 summer fieldwork accomplishments for the Hydrology and Surficial Geology Section and the goals for renewable hydropower program.

Q: Do you know what the timeline was for the shothole data, is it old?
A: Yes, from the 60s and 70s.
Q: Have you worked at all with ASRC?
A: Yes, they produced a report on the Triangle Community Road area, six samples in that report and we've been expanding on that data.
Q: Do you have some focus areas that you're starting with like Susitna Hydropower or is this wider?
A: It is wide, Matt is looking statewide but he is working on some specific projects for this as well.
Q: How does this overlap with Alaska Energy Authority? They do a lot of work on particularly hydropower but other energy sources and transmission of energy as well.
A: I don't know offhand. Matt might know more.
Q: What percentage of the lidar data collected is done in house with drones/other gear?
A: Leslie Jones with the Alaska Geospatial Office coordinates the lidar we get from vendors. It's the private companies that are good at doing large surveys. But if you need a survey at a specific time, one that is not too large, it is better for us to do it on our own with fixed wing or helicopter.

- Energy Resources
  M. Wartes: Gave an overview of the Energy Section's objectives and how their work is being used. The aims of each program include data collection, mapping, and publications. Collaborations with partners such as UAF and USGS benefit these projects in our advancement.

Q: Is your Ray River data published yet?
A: We were required through the DOE grants to post all our geochemical information and related data on their EDX database. I'm not sure how easily accessible that is to the public. We intend to make it more public.

BREAK **11:07 am**

- Mineral Resources
  T. Naibert: There are currently three main goals in the Minerals Section, producing the Alaska Mineral Industry Report, contracting and publishing geophysical surveys, and producing modern geologic maps. Naibert then reflected on each of the three main programs. Discussion was on upcoming fieldwork potential of the Kuskokwim belt or the Seward Peninsula and how the program is federally funded and what would be the best place to focus on.

Q: On the Kuskokwim area, what year are you guys thinking of beginning your regional mapping to follow the geophysics you've just completed?
A: That would be part of this question of whether we want to do an entire field campaign to remap the Eagle area or put it in a bigger compilation project. We would move to our next focus area in 2028 or 2029 and whether the next focus area will be Seward Peninsula or Kuskokwim area, we are open to input from the board.

- Geologic Hazards
  C. Cameron: The section's mission is for baseline and new data collection, hazard response, and conducting research to better understand and mitigate the potential geologic hazards to buildings, roads, bridges, and other installations and structures. Program leads gave an overview of each of the programs in the Hazards Section, which include Volcanology, Coastal Hazards, Earthquake & Tsunami, Landslides, Climate & Cryosphere, and Geological Health Hazards Program.

Q: Has the state constitution been examined either by DGGS or Department of Law regarding who should respond to state geo hazards?
A: DGGS is mandated in state statutes to determine geological hazards by the executive branch and the people of Alaska. The Department of Law's preliminary review was that DGGS does not currently have statute for it.
Q: There still can be a difference between statute and constitution.
A: I don't believe it's in the state constitution, but we would need to check.

LUNCH BREAK **11:55 am**
CONVENE Afternoon Session **1:05 pm**

- Geologic Information Center
  M. Hendricks: The three main efforts of the GIC are to aid with Publications, GIS, and IT support.

- Alaska Geospatial Office
  L. Jones: The primary functions of the Alaska Geospatial Office are to identify and fill data gaps; data governance; streamline date access; and continue to engage in and create strategic partnerships. This section collaborates, with the AGO support, on Statewide Lidar, Alaska Geospatial Council, and State of Alaska Geoportal.

Q: My question is in regard to sea level rise and its effects in Alaska.
A: We work closely with NOAA on that. We prioritize coastal lidar acquisitions from NOAA for sea level rise models.
Q: Do you have a date when the 37 cm Maxar imagery is going to be published?

A: The service is available, but it's not published as a tile map service. We've asked the USGS to publish a tile map version. The current version has not been released to the general public because of the possible negative feedback.

- Geologic Materials Center
  K. Johnson: Gave an overview of projects at the GMC including warehouse storage, core counts, GMC HSI tools, metadata goals for mineral samples, and data storage.

Q: At what point do you discard core?
A: Preferable we would like to scan the core we have before we have to face the decision of throwing materials out.

Old Business **2:00 pm**

- Review FY2026 STATEMAP Proposal
  J. Athey and DGGS staff: Presented an overview of MatSu geologic mapping, Brookian stratigraphic information, and FY2025 GeMS digitization of legacy maps.

M. Hanson: It seems like Hatcher Pass would be a better choice right now.
R. Retherford: I would vote for Hatcher Pass.
D. Kreiner: I think the timing of the geothermal component is important.
E. Campbell: We also have state funds for geothermal that could help with the match.

- FY2026 NGGDPP Proposal
  J. Athey: Presented an overview of 1.) National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Shothole Database, 2.) Municipality of Anchorage Avalanche Archival Database, 3.) Bureau of Mines/Bureau of Land Management Archival Digitization, 4.) Geologic Materials Center Core Re-Boxing, and 5.) Energy Photogrammetry Data Management

M. Hanson: I support 1, 4 and 5
S. Digert: I also support 1, 4 and 5 in that order.
K. Brennan: I support 1, 4 and 5
M. Wartes: If there is a chance that option 3 falls off the list, we may be able to pick up some of it in the coming years.
D. Kreiner: I support 1, 4 and 5. Prioritizing #1 given the current interest in NPRA.
R. Kirkham: I support 1, 4 and 5. Leaning towards #5 as number one.
M. Ellanna: I support 3, 4 and 1.

Public comments or questions **2:30 pm**

None

Board public comments **2:45 pm**

R. Kirkham: With the help of Erin and Jen, I suggest we help author a letter to our Governor and legislators stressing the importance of the work at the division and their needed support. The plan would be to have it out by the 10th of February.
M. Ellana: If we could see a breakdown of federal dollars in the budget in the last several years, I think that would be beneficial.
R. Kirkham: There is a lifting of PLO 5150 and the potential rapid ingress of 1,000,000 acres of new open land and industry. You may get a push to change the focus of your research. So just keep that in mind.

Board discussion, if needed (closed to the public) **2:50 pm**

None

ADJOURN **2:52 pm**