

Draft Minutes for the 1621st meeting of the Geological Society of Washington

May 13, 2026

John Wesley Powell Auditorium, Cosmos Club, DC

President Ackerson called the meeting to order at 8:07 PM ET.

Attendance

There were 39 attendees in-person (no online).

Minutes

The meeting began with announcements, then moved on to the approval of the minutes from the previous meeting (1620th). The minutes of the 1620th meeting had been posted online and a Minutes Minute was read aloud and approved.

Minutes Minute:

The 1620th GSW meeting took place on April 29th, 2026 at the Cosmos Club. President Ackerson called the meeting to order at 8:04 PM. We had 39 attendees, all in person. We had 3 guests in attendance, and no new members. We had no announcements or informal communications, but obituaries were read for Peter Kranz, JJ Hemley, and Pete Toulmin, and a moment of silence was observed. The formal program commenced at 8:19 ET and consisted of three speakers: Andrea Goltz (Carnegie Earth and Planets Laboratory), Supratik Roy (Johns Hopkins University), and Kelsey Jenkins (Smithsonian Institution), who taught us about amphiboles, metamorphic rates, and reptile hearing. President Ackerson adjourned the meeting at 9:51 PM.

Guests and New Members

1 guest was announced: Chris Kennedy (Bloomberg Economics). 12 new members were announced. Currently at 174 members.

Obituaries

None

Announcements

Field trip: Billy Goat Trail at Great Falls, June 6 9-12 from the visitors center, led by Alan Pitts. Email pitts.alan@gmail.com to sign up.

Informal Communications

Bill Burton (USGS, ret.): shared photos from a 16-day Grand Canyon float trip, highlighting Toreva blocks, the Great Unconformity, lava dam remnants, and fluvial erosion. A geologic river guide is scheduled to be published in about a year.

Liz Cottrell (Smithsonian): GSW council has approved a new award to recognize extraordinary service to GSW. Nominations for 2026 are due October 7.

Formal Program

The formal program commenced at 8:41 PM ET and consisted of two speakers: Sarah Ryker (U.S. Geological Survey, Associate Director for the Geology, Energy, and Minerals Mission Area), and Megan Carr (Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Associate Director of the Strategic Resources Program).

1st formal talk: USGS Geology, Energy, & Minerals Directions

Sarah spoke about the current state of the USGS Geology, Energy, and Minerals Direction, touching on its priorities, programs, resources, partnerships, and initiatives. Highlights included partnerships for the geologic mapping program, emerging energy resources, mineral supply chain information, and mapping gaps. Of particular interest to the Meeting Secretary was the announcement of a national index of borehole information! The core message was that geoscience remains a crucial component of the US economy, and there is a great deal of innovation in this space.

8:43-9:20

Jamie Allen (NSF, ret.): where's the government support for smelting & refining?

Liz Cottrell (Smithsonian): where's the geology in New England?

Liz Cottrell (Smithsonian): how is the Organic Act supposed to transfer material from the USGS to Smithsonian? Is there money available for cataloging?

Steve Mackwell (NSF, ret): what is the nature of the partnership between USGS and Planet Labs?

2nd formal talk: Applied Science for Energy Policy Decisions

Megan discussed current priorities at BOEM, including scoping of undersea minerals (and elements), mineral development and their environmental impacts, regions for possible future leasing for minerals, oil & gas, geopolitical complexities influencing and influenced by ocean resources, and navigating multiple uses of ocean energy resources (including carbon capture & storage).

9:30-10:01 (32 attendees in person)

Gabriella Farham (Smithsonian): is there research being done on oxygen production by deep sea manganese nodules, and mining's potential impacts on ecosystems that depend on this oxygen?

Chris Sweezy (USGS): do the OCS zones line up with the US exclusive economic zone?

Jamie Allen (NSF, ret.): will BOEM merge back with BESI?

John Counts (USGS): are there geologic criteria for determining the boundaries of the OCS zones?

Jane Hammerstrom (USGS, ret.): how much interest is there in offshore phosphorite?

Liz Cottrell (Smithsonian): what work is being done in the western Aleutians, and is that in collaboration with academic partners?

Andy Campbell (NRC, ret.): is there a criteria that BOEM is using to gauge the quality of the sediment-hosted deposits?

President Ackerson adjourned the meeting at 10:16.

Respectfully submitted by Karin Lehnigk, GSW meeting secretary