

Draft Minutes for the 1622nd meeting of the Geological Society of Washington

September 2, 2026

John Wesley Powell Auditorium, Cosmos Club, DC

President Ackerson called the meeting to order at 8:05 PM ET.

Attendance

There were 49 attendees in-person (no online).

Minutes

The meeting began with announcements, then moved on to the approval of the minutes from the previous meeting (1621st). The minutes of the 1621st meeting had been posted online and a Minutes Minute was read aloud and approved.

Guests and New Members

14 guests were announced: Fred Simarelli (USGS), Noah Mamula (Self), Mariah Mamula (Self), James McFadden (SpaceX), Alexander Kling (JHU APL), Mo Hajju (Smithsonian NHM), Xinghai He (Smithsonian NHM), Sarah Brooker (Smithsonian NHM), Frankie Riley (Smithsonian NHM), Tim Henderson (Smithsonian NASM), Amu Ransen (Finnish Museum of Natural History), Sera Jorno (Carnegie EPL), Margulita (Ohio State), Alex Grey (USGS). 6 new members were announced. Currently at 184 members.

Obituaries

A moment of silence was observed for Tina Silver (USGS), an avid educator and wonderful person.

Announcements

Field trip to Great Falls: led by Alan Pitts and Alex Gray, with 9 participants. A fall trip is currently being planned, and the spring 2027 trip will be a geologic walking tour of The Wire.

New service award led by Liz Cottrell: accepting nominations through October 7th, nomination instructions were sent out after the May meeting. If you're interested in nominating someone, email Liz (cottrelle@si.edu) to start the process.

Poster session at October 20th meeting at Carnegie EPL.

Bradley lecture: Basil Tikhoff will be talking about structure.

Informal Communications

Ved Lekic (UMD): UMD Hells Lecture will be given by Barbara Romanowicz October 8th, and technical lecture on October 9th.

Formal Program

The formal program commenced at 8:21 PM ET and consisted of three speakers: Andrew Hoxey (George Mason University), John Counts (USGS), and Ned Mamula (USGS).

1st formal talk: Active faulting in western Nepal that segments the Himalaya

Andrew gave a great overview of techniques in tectonic geomorphology used to characterize regional deformation and slip rates from surface expression of displacement. Many convergent boundaries have some oblique component, and the Karakorum Fault in the Himalayas offers an opportunity to study the implications of this. Detailed structural, topographic, and geomorphic mapping combined with geochronology revealed net slip rates of 3.4-6.8 km, helping to pinpoint the onset of southwest propagation of orogen-parallel shear.

8:21-8:43

Mong Han Huang (UMD): what's the depth of the strike-slip fault; is it above or below the limit of detachment?

Ved Lekic (UMD): can you say more about the seismicity and microseismicity along this fault?

Mike Ackerson (Smithsonian NHM): how does this type of collision compare with more typical continent-oceanic collision?

2nd formal talk: An Overview of Some USGS Regional Provenance Studies in the Gulf, Atlantic, and Alaskan Coastal Plains

John gave a comprehensive overview of source-to-sink projects at the USGS, where detrital zircon unmixing from sediment at major basin outlets is used to determine sediment provenance. These methods reveal regional sediment contributions and large-scale changes (e.g. sea level changes and progradation rates), as well as high variability of detrital zircon age spectra within a single basin and over time.

8:49-9:11

Owen Powell (Montgomery College, ret.): in the Mid-Atlantic, did you take the Chesapeake Impact Basin into account?

Liz Cottrell (Smithsonian NHM): where and how are these sediments archived?

Ross Salerno (USGS): why is there so much Grenvillian crust when it's so far away and there's so much other stuff in between?

Dan Doctor (USGS): what are the youngest ages in the Appalachian-derived sediments?

Mike Ackerson: have you considered analyzing things that date metamorphism, not just cooling?

3rd formal talk: Organizing Science in Washington — The Legacy of John Wesley Powell

Ned presented an enthusiastic overview of the history of the USGS beginning with Clarence King's survey of the 40th Parallel through future plans to catalog critical minerals and critical water, leading up to the agency's 150th anniversary. John Wesley Powell's legacy permeates this history, through his surveying, scientific contributions, and vision.

9:21-9:47 (45 attendees in person)

Karin Lehnigk (NASA GSFC): how has the role of topographic mapping changed since Powell's time, in light of the new methodologies and needs of today?

Liz Cottrell (Smithsonian NHM): what does the future look like for hiring and job growth for students and the next generation of USGS scientists?

Ved Lekic (UMD): what's the USGS' role in partnering with academic institutions to support the next generation of geologists?

Andy Campbell (Self): how will abandoned mines and mine waste be handled?

Laura Kean (MathWorks): how can we improve communication and collaboration between scientists and engineers?

President Ackerson adjourned the meeting at 10:06.

Respectfully submitted by Karin Lehnigk, GSW meeting secretary