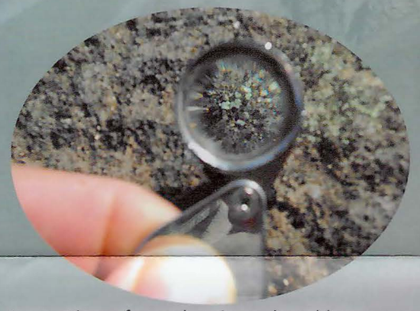
Geoscience Careers

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Geologic Resources Division

What Is a Geoscientist?

Geoscientists examine the physical features of Earth such as rocks, soil, oceans, rivers and streams, and the atmosphere in order to understand how the Earth works. They study evidence of past life and processes to understand what could happen in the future.
Geoscientists also answer questions and solve problems about how society can utilize Earth's resources and minimize hazards associated with its natural processes.

Geoscientists—like detectives—use clues preserved in the Earth to understand past ecosystems and events. For example, geoscientists study fossils and rocks to learn about life, landscapes, and climates thousands, millions, or billions of years ago. Geoscientists piece together these clues to tell the Earth's story and to understand causes of changes, like extinctions or climate change, in order to predict what might happen in the future.



Inspection of a rock using a hand lens

Geoscientists drilling at Petersburg National Battlefield, Virginia

Geoscientists explore the planet in search of valuable resources—Earth's treasures—such as water, minerals, and energy sources upon which human society depends. As our population grows and our resource needs expand, geoscientists develop new strategies to find, extract, and use these resources responsibly to protect the Earth and ensure availability for future generations.

Geoscientists—Earth's "doctors"—maintain the Earth's natural processes and reduce dangers that come with living on a changing planet. They use tools in the field and laboratory to detect pollutants in water, soil and rock and develop clean-up and prevention plans. Geoscientists also develop methods to restore natural landscapes and processes affected by resource extraction. They use their knowledge of geologic processes to help communities understand potential geologic hazards.

An NPS intern collects a water sample at Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, Colorado

Career Resources

Internships are a great way to get started in the geosciences. Internships allow you to gain experience and test out a career without the commitment of a permanent job.

Geoscientists-in-the-Parks
www.nature.nps.gov/geology/gip/index.cfm

NPS Student Educational Employment Program
http://go.nps.gov/student

Youth Conservation Corps
www.nps.gov/gettinginvolved/youthprograms/ycc.htm

Student Conservation Association
http://thesca.org/

The Corps Network
www.corpsnetwork.org/

Volunteer.gov
www.volunteer.gov

Jobs with the National Park Service
www.nps.gov/aboutus/workwithus.htm

Learn More and Get Involved!

Are you interested in learning about the Earth and its resources? Do you want to protect the environment? Do you like to be outside hiking, camping and exploring new places? If so, a career as a geoscientist might be for you! No matter how old you are or where you live, you can start preparing yourself today for a future in the geosciences.

In the Classroom

- Ask your teacher to invite a local geoscientist to visit the classroom
- Bring in rocks or fossils you have collected to share with the class for show and tell
- Investigate a geoscience topic for your school's science fair
- Take a geoscience class like geology, environmental science, oceanography, meteorology, or astronomy
- Join or start a geoscience club

Outside the Classroom

- Start a rock, mineral, or fossil collection, being mindful of local collecting rules
- Find an expert to identify items from your collection
- Visit and/or volunteer at a nearby park or museum
- Subscribe to a science or outdoor magazine
- Join a local geoscience organization
- Apply for a summer internship

On-line

No parks or science museums nearby? No worries! The internet is also a great place to learn about the geosciences. The National Park Service has a variety of educational resources available for your use.

Geologic Resources Inventory (High school and college)
http://go.nps.gov/gri
This program provides digital geologic map data and reports to national parks. The information is an excellent resource for school projects.

National Fossil Day (All ages)
http://go.nps.gov/nfd
National Fossil Day is a celebration promoting public awareness and stewardship of fossils, as well as to foster a greater appreciation of their scientific and educational value.

Junior Paleontologist (Age 5-12)
http://go.nps.gov/jrpaleo
EXPLORE the ways that paleontologists work; LEARN about Earth's history; and PROTECT fossils in our national parks. Download the Junior Paleontologist Activity Booklet at the link provided above.

Views of the National Parks (All ages)
http://go.nps.gov/views
Views is a multimedia educational program presenting the natural, cultural, and historical resources of our national parks. You can learn about volcanoes, glaciers, caves, geologic time, and more!

Web Ranger (Age 5-12)
www.nps.gov/webrangers/
This is the National Park Service's on-line Junior Ranger program. If you love your National Parks, Monuments and Historic Sites, this site is for you.

Geoscience Careers

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Geologic Resources Division

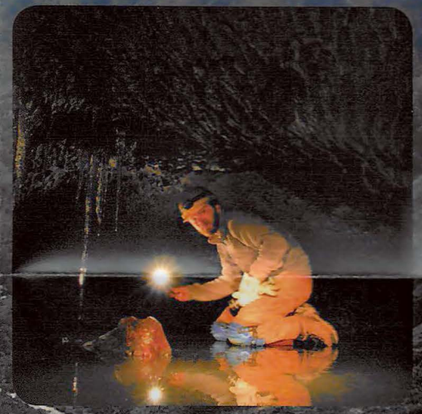
Geoscientists have some of the best jobs in the most amazing locations throughout the world. Do you want to understand the world around you?

National parks are great places to learn about Earth's past, present and future! Follow your passion and begin exploring today!

Geoscientists work in iconic landscapes like those in Mount Rainier National Park, Washington

Geoscientists explore extreme environments at Yosemite National Park, California

Geoscientists tell Earth's story using remarkable features at Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah



Geoscientists survey hundreds of miles of cave passages at Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky

Geoscientists monitor the restless Earth at Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming

Geoscientists search for fossils to reconstruct past ecosystems and climate change at Badlands National Park, South Dakota

Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Texas