

NISQUALLY CHAPTER OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL &
ENGINEERING GEOLOGISTS



The Official AEG Nisqually Chapter Newsletter

Meeting Details

Thursday, Jan. 15th

Location: La Quinta

1425 E 27th St, Tacoma, WA

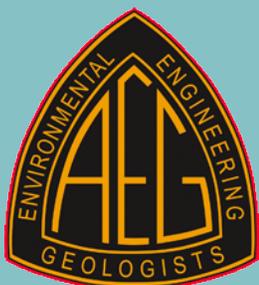
[Google Maps Link](#)

RSVP Online:

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/joint-nisqually-puget-sound-january->

Upcoming Meetings:

February 18
March 23
April 14



Puget Sound and Nisqually Joint Meeting

January 15, 2026

Summary of Abandoned Coal Mines, Hazard Investigation, and Reclamation in Western Washington

*John Bingam and Margot Ferencz, Haley & Aldrich
With an introduction from Tim Walsh*

Where: La Quinta Inn and Suites, Tacoma (see page 3)

When: January 15, 2026 (Thurs.)

6:00 PM Social Hour

7:00-7:30 PM Dinner (Buffet open 6:45)

7:30 PM Speaker

How Much: \$45 AEG Member and AEG Prospective Member: \$55 Non Member, \$10 Students*

SIGN UP:

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/joint-nisqually-puget-sound-january-meeting>

*This meeting and social hour are generously sponsored by
Holt Services the West Coast's largest full service drilling
firm*



<https://www.holtservicesinc.com/>

*student fee may be waived if this is a barrier to attending—contact aegpugetsound@gmail.com

Summary of Abandoned Coal Mines, Hazard Investigation, and Reclamation in Western Washington

John Bingham and Margot Ferencz, Haley & Aldrich



Since the 1977 enactment of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA), the Office of Surface Mining (OSM) has been reclaiming land damaged by coal mining activity in Western Washington. These include over 100 sites in King County's Cougar Mountain Wildland Park from the 1980's up to the most recent activity in October 2024. Margot Ferencz and John Bingham of Haley and Aldrich (formerly Hart Crowser) will present a summary of abandoned coal mines in western Washington, common coal mining methods, OSM's reclamation program, and closure methods. The discussion will focus on King County and more specifically the Newcastle-Cougar Mountain area. Tim Walsh, now retired from the Washington State Geological Survey, will present a brief introduction on the state's activities in the early mine surveys to support SMCRA.

Bios:

John Bingham is a geotechnical engineer generalist who has been with Haley & Aldrich (formerly Hart Crowser) for 28 years. He has worked on OSM and abandoned mine land (AML) projects for most of his career. His geotechnical, environmental, restoration, and design experience has helped him keep learning during inventories, investigations, and reclamations for hundreds of AML features.

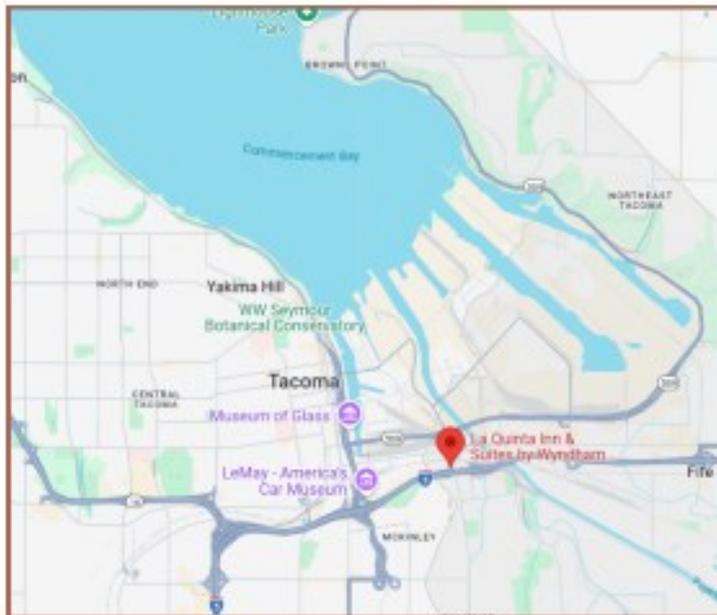
Margot Ferencz has been a geotechnical engineer with Haley & Aldrich (formerly Hart Crowser) since 2019. She has a strong background in geology having earned a master's degree in geology from Rutgers University in 2015. Her first OSM coal reclamation project was with Hart Crowser in 2020 and it quickly became her favorite type of work. Since 2020 she has been involved in the investigation and reclamation of over two dozen coal mine features.



Venue Information for January Meeting

Returning from last year, our January venue will be the La Quinta Inn & Suites just off I-5 in Tacoma. Our event will be in one of the banquet rooms, just tell the front desk you are here for AEG.

Address: 1425 E 27th St, Tacoma, WA 98421





Message from the Chair

Hello, AEG Nisqually!

We are beginning our winter program, starting with our January meeting, which will be a joint meeting with AEG Puget in Tacoma. Later this winter, we will be hosting a presentation on emerging rockfall characterization technology, followed by this year's Jahns Lecturer, both at our usual location in Olympia. Your board will be meeting to discuss our spring program, including a possible field trip in partnership with some other local AEG chapters.

Atmospheric rivers

It has certainly been a geologically active winter here in Washington State, so far. Whether you work in the public sector or not, you were likely affected by windstorms, electrical outages, and road closures that resulted from the mid-December storms and landslides. I had an opportunity to give a brief slideshow of highway damages during our December Meeting. Almost a month later, we are still busy repairing and recovering. This hasn't left me much time for organizing AEG Nisqually events, so I am grateful for our partnership with AEG Puget this month and sponsorship of our joint meeting by Holt Drilling.

Meanwhile...

The year 2024 was the hottest on record globally and 2025 will soon be confirmed as the second or third hottest, adding to a long-term trend: The last 12 years have been the 12 hottest on record. The science is not hard to follow. As more carbon is added into the atmosphere, the earth heats up. The number of days that we will experience atmospheric rivers is projected to increase. Atmospheric rivers are also expected to be bigger and more hazardous on average, meaning more rain over more area for longer.

While I can make jokes about job security, those jokes are beginning to fall a bit flat as news comes in of the US defunding science agencies such as NIH, NSF, and NASA and leaving 66 international organizations, including UNFCCC and IPCC. As an association of scientists, it is not partisan or inappropriate to take notice of these things and mention them here.

I'm proud of the place we live. I love our geology and our physiography. On a more nuanced and complicated level, I'm also a fan of PNW culture and commitment to science. Washington has pushed back against the politicization of science and the dismissal of scientific consensus at the federal level, particularly regarding public health and climate change. Check out the news on the West Coast Health Alliance and the Climate Commitment Act if you need a boost.

Please renew your membership and select AEG Nisqually

When you renew your AEG membership be sure to select Nisqually as your Chapter. It puts a few more bucks into the Chapter account and keeps our numbers up.

It's great to be part of AEG Nisqually! I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Gabe Taylor

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The AEG Nisqually Chapter Newsletter

The Association of Engineering Geologists (AEG) contributes to its members' professional success and the public welfare by providing leadership, advocacy, and applied research in environmental and engineering geology. AEG's values are based on the belief that its members have a responsibility to assume stewardship over their fields of expertise. AEG is the acknowledged international leader in environmental and engineering geology, and is greatly respected for its stewardship of the profession.

AEG NISQUALLY CHAPTER NEWSLETTER is published monthly from September through April. Subscriptions are for members of AEG affiliated with the Nisqually Chapter or other Chapters, and other interested people. E-mail subscriptions are free.

Mailing List sign up link: <http://eepurl.com/c5gyKn>

