

Educating the Public and Students using *Roadside Geology of Georgia*

Since its release five years ago on May 30, more than 6000 copies of *Roadside Geology of Georgia* have been sold. Its authors Pamela Gore and Bill Witherspoon have given well over 100 programs tying Georgia geology to topics as diverse as gold rush and settlement history, Civil War battles, fossil collecting, landscape evolution, plant communities, climate history, and specific outdoor destinations. In this presentation to the Atlanta Geological Society, the authors will set the stage with a history of the *Roadside Geology* series, and then share visuals from their diverse presentations. Illustrations from the book will be supplemented by special uses of Google Earth, such as geologic map overlays, tours, and pull-up cross sections.

Roadside Geology of Georgia is used as a textbook in several colleges and universities in the state. For example, at Emory at Oxford, the book was a foundation of a course connecting geology to Georgia history and geography. At the University of North Georgia, Gainesville, all students enrolled in Introductory Geology and Earth Materials courses are asked to locate an outcrop with the information contained in the book, record photos, populate descriptions in a GIS database, and write a report.

Georgia was 31st among the 37 states covered by the *Roadside Geology* series, which started in 1972. The series is “aimed at people with a ninth-grade education,” according to Donald Hyndman, its co-creator with the late David Alt. The format is characterized by concise introductions to concepts, both beginning the book and for specific regions; end-to-end road guides for major highways within each geologic region; and road guide maps with arrows tagging outstanding geologic features.

All books since 2010 are in full color, which enhances both their visual appeal and the usability of the road guide maps. Full color titles now cover the states AK, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, MD, MS, NJ, NV, OR, PA, UT, and WA, as well as DC and “Yellowstone Country.” Several of these are updates or new works replacing books from the 70’s and 80’s. The value of the series to excite the public about geology, orient the traveling geologist, and introduce undergraduates to local geology has been growing with these developments.