TBPG Summer Newsletter - June 2024

Message from our Board Chairman

By W. David Prescott, P.G., TBPG Board Chair

Summer is Here!

Last quarter, I wrote about Soil Science Licensure at the TBPG, sparking numerous positive responses and opening constructive dialogues. This month, I aim to create the same engagement with TBPG staff, Board Members, Licensed Texas P.G.s (across all disciplines), and the public.

Whether you're a seasoned professional geologist, soil scientist, geophysicist, or an aspiring G.I.T., staying informed about licensure requirements and updates is crucial. Understanding the history and current landscape of licensure at the TBPG is essential. Here's what you need to know to navigate your professional journey in Texas as a licensed Geophysicist.

Dr. Bereket M. Derie, Appointed Professional TBPG Board Member and Licensed Geophysicist, states: "The practice of geoscience is crucial for the public's health, safety, and welfare. Being a licensed professional geophysicist enhances career opportunities, credibility, and financial benefits. Including licensing status in job searches by providing a competitive advantage over other applicants. Above all, it has been the law in Texas since September 1, 2001."

As Dr. Derie highlights, the competitive advantage of being one of only 187 licensed professional Geophysicists in the State of Texas is significant.

The legislative background and stipulations of Texas Senate Bill 405 (SB 405), enacted on February 12, 2001, established the TBPG with the mandate to license and regulate the practice of geoscience in Texas. This legislation formally recognized geophysics alongside geology and soil science within its jurisdiction, marking a pivotal moment in the geosciences for licensure since 2001.

Becoming a licensed geophysicist in Texas requires specific educational and experience criteria. A degree in geophysics or a related field, combined with substantial work experience under a licensed professional, ensures that only qualified individuals practice in Texas, maintaining the integrity and professionalism of the field.

Geophysics testing is a critical component regulated by the Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists (TBPG) to ensure that all licensed professionals adhere to the highest standards of practice. This testing encompasses various methods to analyze subsurface conditions, including seismic, magnetic, electrical, and gravity surveys. These techniques provide detailed images and data essential for making informed decisions in fields such as groundwater management, environmental assessments, and infrastructure projects.

The geophysics licensure test administered by the TBPG is designed to assess the competency and knowledge of aspiring licensed geophysicists. The test typically includes:

1. **Fundamental Principles:** Questions on the fundamental principles of geophysics, including the physics of the Earth, basic geological concepts, and the mathematical principles used in geophysical analysis.
2. **Geophysical Methods:** Detailed questions on various geophysical methods such as seismic, magnetic, electrical, and gravity surveys. Candidates need to demonstrate their understanding of how these methods are applied in different contexts.
3. **Data Analysis and Interpretation:** Testing the ability to analyze and interpret geophysical data accurately. This includes understanding signal processing, data correction, and the integration of geophysical data with geological and environmental data.
4. **Field Procedures:** Knowledge of field procedures, including the setup and operation of geophysical equipment, field data collection techniques, and safety protocols.
5. **Regulatory and Ethical Standards:** Questions on the regulatory framework governing the practice of geophysics in Texas, including the TBPG's code of ethics and professional conduct standards.
6. **Applications:** Practical questions that test the ability to apply geophysical methods to real-world scenarios, such as groundwater exploration, environmental assessments, and infrastructure development.

By covering these areas, the test ensures that candidates are well-prepared to perform their duties as licensed geophysicists, maintaining public health, safety, and welfare.

Maintaining your licensure involves completing continuing education requirements. This is not just a regulatory mandate but an opportunity to stay current with advancements and best practices in geophysics. Engaging in these learning activities ensures you can provide the best possible service and keep pace with technological innovations.

Adhering to the TBPG’s code of ethics is essential. Conduct your work with honesty, integrity, and accountability. Ethical practice enhances the profession's reputation and ensures the safety and well-being of the communities we serve.

Networking and mentorship are crucial for professional growth. Engage with professional organizations and seek mentorship from experienced geophysicists. These relationships can provide invaluable insights, advice, and opportunities for career advancement.

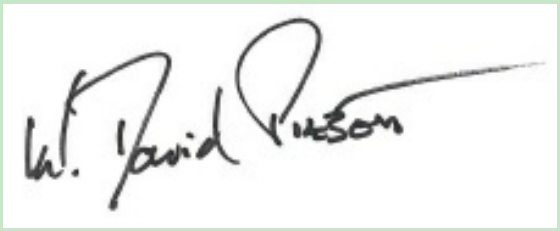
Rusty Branch, TBPG Advocate and Licensed P.G., shares: "I love my role as a Texas geophysics professional! Working on complicated projects where subsurface imaging is a big

value-add allows us to fill in the gaps between traditional geotechnical/geological sampling methods. Our results enable scientists and engineers to make robust decisions about groundwater, environmental, and infrastructure projects, leading to increased protection of public health and safety."

For any questions or further information, please visit our website or contact our office directly. We are here to support you every step of the way in your professional journey in all the disciplines of geoscience.

I trust that this information has been both informative and engaging.

Keep Learning,



W. David Prescott, P.G.

Board Chair, Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists

Red River - East Texas - Photo Credit to: TBPG

Thank you to everyone who visited our booth at the TCEQ Trade Fair on May 14th and 15th!

The Texas Board of Professional Geoscientists was honored to staff a booth at the TCEQ Trade Fair on May 14th and 15th. We enjoy being able to meet our licensees, and put faces to the names we've seen cross our desks. Thank you to everyone who signed up for our volunteer list and to be a PG in the Spotlight for upcoming Newsletters.
A HUGE thank you to Board Secretary Mark Varhaug for the Ethics presentation, and TCEQ for having us.

March 2024 Exam Results

ASBOG's computer based examinations were held on March 12th and 15th at various testing locations across Texas.

At the March ASBOG examinations:

Out of 58 candidates approved to sit for the Practice of Geology, 53 sat and 46 of them passed, for an average pass rate of 87%

Out of 125 candidates approved to sit for the Fundamentals of Geology, 107 sat and 62 of them passed, for an average pass rate of 58%

EXAM	APPROVED	SAT	PASSED	PERCENTAGE
PG	58	53	46	87%
FG	125	107	62	58%

ASBOG is working closely with their testing partner, Prometric, to identify any possible improvements for our candidates. We look forward to continuing our partnership with ASBOG to improve access to the examinations and work with potential exam candidates on their path to licensure.

ASBOG Fall 2024 Computer-Based Examinations

TBPG is currently accepting and processing applications for the computer-based administration of the ASBOG Fundamentals of Geology (FG) and Practice of Geology (PG) examinations scheduled for October 3rd and 4th, 2024.
All applications and supporting documents must be received by TBPG by September 6th.

Approved Candidates will be able to schedule their examination(s) at either the AM or PM times. Currently, candidates can choose from 47 testing locations across Texas. For a complete list of the current cities with testing sites, please visit Prometric by **CLICKING HERE**

Candidates will also be able to schedule their examination as soon as they are approved and not have to wait until six weeks before the exam date to choose their location and register.

Although TBPG is no longer administering the exam(s), we will continue to qualify applicants to sit for examinations and distribute exam scores to candidates.

For more information about applying for an Exam, click here!

To Register online to sit for an Exam, click here!

New ASBOG Examinee Candidate Handbook, click here!

The ASBOG Examinee Candidate Handbook is the official guide to policies and procedures for the ASBOG National Geology Examinations. This guide will provide important information to exam candidates regarding scope; content and development of the licensure exams; a step-by-step guide to register and pay for the computer-based exams and select a testing location; and example practice questions to help prepare for the ASBOG National Geology Examinations. It was updated in May of 2023.

ASBOG's Fundamentals of Geology Prep course is available. This is an immersive, on-demand, and fully online course, meticulously designed to empower candidates for the ASBOG Fundamentals of Geology (FG) exam. For more information, please see ASBOG's website HERE!

We are pleased to have Ms. Kathleen Vail, who currently works for Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc. as our PG in the Spotlight for this issue!

1) When were you first licensed? Why is having a PG license important to you?

I was originally grandfathered when Texas first started licensing geoscientists. Later after I retired from the state and became a consultant, I decided to take the ASBOG exams. I had been out of school for a long time. I was working 50-60 hours a week and was often in the field. Learning to study again was a challenge, but I wanted the personal satisfaction of passing the exams and the ability to work in other states. I passed both exams the first time I took them.

I believe that licensing is important to protect the public and the profession by ensuring a fundamental level of knowledge, experience, and ethical standards. When I worked for the state, I saw unqualified people represent private citizens and companies before my agency. The quality of their work was substandard and reflected poorly on our profession, as clients often did not understand what the work entailed or how to know that they were hiring someone reputable and qualified. The licensing process is important to filter out unqualified individuals and to protect our profession.

2) Why did you pursue a career in Geoscience? What part of Geoscience interested you the most?

I've always been fascinated by rocks and river processes. I grew up in south Louisiana near the Mississippi River, so while there weren't any outcrops to visit, I learned about point bars and cut banks at an early age. The only place to find rocks were local gravel pits where we Pebble Pups would meet to search for rocks.

Though it had been my childhood dream, I took a roundabout path to becoming a geologist as I was not confident in my ability to master the math and other science requirements. After a couple of years as a social worker, my engineer brother dared me to go back to school, follow my dreams, and get a geology degree. It was a struggle but I persevered and graduated from LSU with a BS in Geology, during the peak oil and gas times of the early 1980's. I was able to work a couple of years before the crash of the industry in the mid-1980's, so it was back to school. I obtained a MS in Geology from Texas A&M Kingsville. As the petroleum and uranium industries were still not hiring, I shifted to environmental geology where there were job opportunities. Due to my previous experience in the oil industry, I was hired to regulate industrial and hazardous waste injection wells (reviewing permit applications and overseeing field tests). I worked in many areas within the agency over the next 20 years (industrial and hazardous waste, underground injection control, radioactive waste, regulation development, enforcement, and remediation). I retired from the state, moved to west Texas, and became a consultant. The move allowed me to work directly with the Ogallala and Blaine

Aquifers. The karst nature of the Blaine has been especially challenging both to assess and remediate and is one of the most interesting aspects of geology that I've worked on. Working in karst is a geologist's dream and a project manager's nightmare.

3) What is your favorite part of working as a geoscientist?

I enjoy solving technical and regulatory problems. I have a chance to utilize all of the skills that I have learned over the years. There is a thrill to finding a solution to a seemingly impossible problem. Ensuring that people have safe water to drink and helping clients find a solution to their problems have become my passion.

4) What are your hopes for the Geoscience industry in Texas?

I hope that the geoscience industry remains diverse so that there are many opportunities whether in remediation, petroleum, uranium, waste management, mining, groundwater supply, carbon sequestration, academia, research, or government. We all have different skill sets that adapt and grow throughout our careers. The beauty of our field is that we can each find our own niche and adapt when the market changes. A vibrant and diverse geoscience industry allows us that freedom.

5) Do you have any advice for someone interested in a career in Geoscience?

Geology is a wonderful and wide-ranging career. There are so many different ways and industries where we practice our craft. It has never been boring and I am always learning something new, even after 45 years. That's why we refer to the "practice of geoscience". We never master it. A good geoscientist understands this and continues to learn and try new things. My advice is to work while in college, get your hands dirty sampling and describing core, get an internship, take and pass the ASBOG Fundamentals of Geology exam your senior year in college, and obtain a geology degree. The longer you are out of school, the harder it is to come back, remember how to study, and pass the exam. Don't limit yourself to environmental or petroleum at this point. You can specialize later in graduate school and on the job. If you learn the basics and begin to think as a geologist as an undergraduate, you will be able to apply that knowledge and skill set wherever you are hired and can better weather the cyclical downturns in the industry. We all have expectations of what our careers will look like but that rarely is how it works out. Get the basics down and be open to opportunities where least expected.

6) What do you do in your spare time?

I enjoy spending time with pets, friends, and family. I read, go to movies, volunteer, and do genealogy.

7) What do you think is the single most important thing for the future of Geology or Geosciences in Texas?

I think that we need to show the public and the legislature the value of our work and that it takes specialized training and experience that is not duplicated by other professions.

Big Bend National Park in Texas - Photo Credit to: TBPG

TBPG CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY - IN PROGRESS!

TBPG sent an invitation to participate in the Customer Service Survey by e-mail on May 13th, 2024 to 9,701 individuals who are either regulated by the TBPG, or who have subscribed to TBPG's e-mail distribution list and have expressed an interest in TBPG activities.
317 surveys were completed as of May 29, 2024 for a response rate of 3.2%. This survey is still in progress! At the end of the Fiscal year additional data will be compiled and be available for updating. These results were part of our Strategic plan submitted on June 1st, but we are continuing to monitor and compile results until August 31st, 2024.

We still need your help! If you have not completed a Customer Service Survey for us, we want to know what you think! **PLEASE CLICK HERE!!** It is ten brief questions about how satisfied you are with different areas of TBPG.
All responses are anonymous unless you leave contact information in the notes at the end.

CSSE Examinations Schedule

CSSE has changed to four scheduled windows per year for all candidates.

Upcoming Soils Exam Dates

JULY – AUGUST 2024
Exam Registration: June 19, 2024 – July 15, 2024
Exam Scheduling: July 17, 2024 – August 1, 2024
Exam Window: July 24, 2024 – August 5, 2024

More information is available on the CSSE Website
Please contact Michele Lovejoy from the CSSE directly at 608-268-4947
or Send Message with any additional questions.

Highlights from the May 10, 2024 Board Meeting

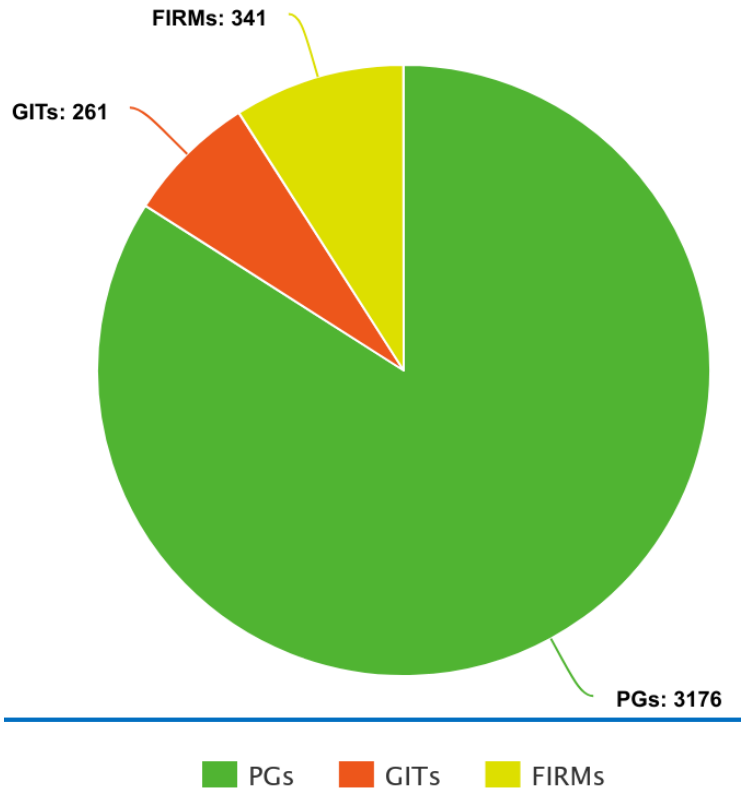
Requests For Waiver of Examination
The Application Review Committee considered 11 applications for Waivers, and recommended 8 of them to the Board.
The full Board approved all 8 of the Waiver requests as recommended by Committee.

Amendments
There were no Proposed or Adopted amendments on the agenda.

Discussion
The Board discussed general outreach, outreach to Universities and the ongoing work of the Carbon Capture and Sequestration workgroup that was created by the Board in 2023. Preparations for the upcoming 89th Legislative session was also discussed.

Agreed Board Order
Proposed Agreed Board order for Complaint 2020-00007 regarding Tracey O'Shay was approved unanimously by the Board.

CURRENT LICENSES AS OF 06/01/2024



TOTAL LICENSES MANAGED 4664 - Current and Expired eligible to renew.

PGs	GITs	FIRMs
Current: 3176	Current: 261	Current: 341
Expired: 692	Expired: 166	Expired: 28

Upcoming TBPG Meetings

Austin, Texas

August 09, 2024
Financial Review/Strategic Planning Committee
Application Review and Continuing Education Committee
General Issues Committee
Compliance and Enforcement Committee

August 10, 2024
TBPG Board Meeting

These meetings may be available for public comment or participation via Zoom.
Meeting agendas including Zoom links will be available on the TBPG website at least one week prior to the meetings.

Opportunities to Volunteer

TBPG wants to continue to build our database of volunteers to serve as Subject Matter Experts on Workgroups and Advisory Committees when opportunities come up. We recognize that our license holders can provide valuable input and guidance on various licensing and registration issues throughout the year. This is a great opportunity to get involved and share your knowledge, experience and expertise with a minimal time requirement.
If you are interested in being considered, please send a message to: volunteer@tbpg.texas.gov and please include a current CV or resume and your area(s) of expertise so we can match you with future opportunities.
Thank you!

Agency Contact Information:

SUBJECT	INFORMATION	PHONE/EMAIL
GENERAL	General questions and inquiries, Token Numbers	512-936-4408 LICENSING@TBPG.TEXAS.GOV
COMPLAINTS	File a Complaint, Complaint inquiries	512-936-4410 COMPLIANCE@TBPG.TEXAS.GOV
CONTINUING EDUCATION	CE Program, CE Audits, CE Requirements	512-936-4410 COMPLIANCE@TBPG.TEXAS.GOV
OUTREACH	Outreach Opportunities	512-936-4401 VOLUNTEER@TBPG.TEXAS.GOV
FINANCE	Accounts Payable, Receivables, Purchasing, ITVs	512-936-4404
LICENSING	New license inquiries, Applications,	512-936-4408 LICENSING@TBPG.TEXAS.GOV

	Examinations, Waivers and Qualifications	
OPEN RECORDS	Open Records or Public Information Requests	512-936-4401 RTRUAN@TBPG.TEXAS.GOV
ONLINE ASSISTANCE	Assistance with the online licensing portal	LICENSINGHELP@HPC.STATE.TX.US

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