

ASPECT

Definition: ˈas – pekt / 1. a position facing a particular direction
2. appearance to the eye & mind.

THE DEGIFS NEWSLETTER

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The “Editorial” – Free Trade With the Americans

Well, yet another announcement about Canadian free trade with the Americans: No, not the one on the most recent cow tested negative for BSE, and the possible reopening of the American border. That was yesterday’s announcement. This is the announcement that the USA will ignore the softwood lumber ruling of the World Trade Organization. They have paved the way to giving the accumulated tariff money to the US saw mills. Ouch! Since they can’t show that Canadian softwood is subsidized, they might as well subsidize their own operations. This isn’t free trade!

Looks bad on the surface, right? Close-up it looks even worse. In Canada, the value of softwood lumber is defined as a finished product; with costs being allocated to buying and harvesting standing timber, getting it to the mill, milling it and selling it. There are significant dollars paid for the product along the path from standing timber to finished 2x4 that are fully taken into consideration in the product. The “free market” concept is a recent concession made that puts some distance on the so called Government subsidy, otherwise known as stumpage. Presently, the British Columbian free market timber, or “purchase wood”, costs less than what it takes to get crown timber to market; The BC mills really have a stumpage penalty!

The US does business differently. The very foundation of the US forest industry is based on the value of standing timber. Everything else is a cost center. Money put into the US standing timber has proven time and again to yield annual rates of around 20%. There are lots of end products for US timber besides softwood. Now, the mills that produce softwood lumber have always been a cost center, with heavy emphasis on losses. They have no control over the timber market, harvesting or log hauling. What the mills really want is access to cheap softwood logs. They want access to raw, Canadian softwood which might help them to be competitive! But Canada has controls on log exports since we want to retain our milling jobs in our “wilderness” communities. The American softwood mills continue to produce 2x4s in hopes of major concessions, while their milling equipment becomes antiquated and/or obsolete, further widening the gap.

There remains little incentive to modernize American saw mills based on this new American subsidy. It may provide the American mills with some minor improvements, but the real money received by the mills will likely be spent in other places. For example, they could acquire more standing timber. Besides, if the money actually went into the US mills and they become competitive with the Canadian operations, how could the US possibly complain that they are hard done by in an unfair trade relationship? Smoke and mirrors!

The American money is in standing timber. That sort of mentality works for them, but how can we make this decision work for DEGIFS members? With the tariff trust fund redistributed into the US mills, our industry will once again tighten the belt and expect reduced costs to produce timber. Feeling squeezed yet? Can DEGIFS members do quality professional work for less? I think not. But DEGIFS members can provide rationalization on how our professional assessments have environmental value on any given project. Why not give us your thoughts on how DEGIFS should present itself so that we are seen as making a difference in our chosen field? **Send letters to the Ed!...**(please please pretty please)

DIVISION OF ENGINEERS AND GEOSCIENTISTS IN THE FOREST SECTOR

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DECEMBER 2004



UP-CLOSE and PROFESSIONAL DEGIFS MEMBER PROFILE

DEGIFS Member: **Bruce Thomson**
Interviewer: Jennifer Clarke

In an effort to showcase the diversity amongst DEGIFS members, Aspect editors have chosen to initiate a "Member Profile". This is the first of what will become a regular feature in our quarterly newsletter. We have chosen to start off with our colleague Bruce Thomson, who has resigned as Senior Editor of Aspect, but who remains a member of the DEGIFS executive. By the way Bruce - THANK-YOU for all your professional insight, editorial prowess and creative wisdom bestowed to Aspect – you will be greatly missed BUT definitely not forgotten!

Note:
This is not H₂O.
Hint:
It rhymes with notch.

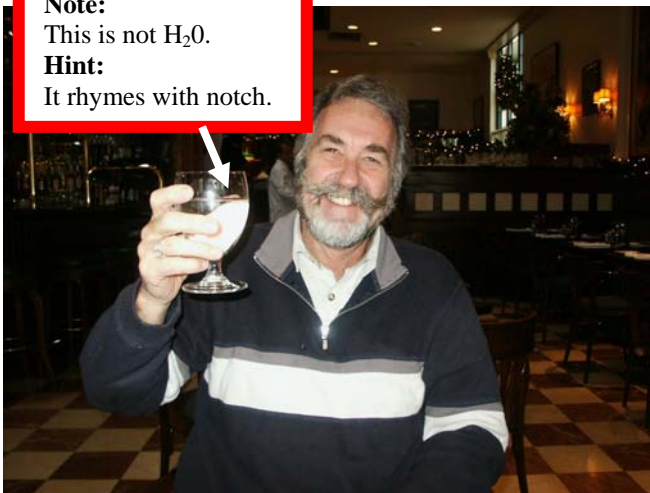


Photo: The Very 1st DEGIFS MEMBER PROFILED -
Bruce Thomson

Who are you and how did you get to where you are?

Bruce Thomson. After bumming around Europe doing odd jobs after a Geography degree at UBC, Bruce worked summers on the cruise ships to Alaska (crème de la crème job of the early 70s) and learned Spanish on the beaches of Manzanero, Mexico in the winter. Bruce entered the discipline of choice (geomorphology) in the newly formed Surficial Geology and Soils Division (SGSD) of the Resource Analysis Branch. This Branch was created by the 1975 NDP provincial government who had a strong environmental

mandate. A first generation terrain classification system for B.C. was developed by Bruce and his fellow scientists within the SGSD. After spending several years mapping BC, the focus changed and, although always aligning himself with a multi-disciplinary group of people, Bruce moved on to be the Regional Geomorphologist with the Vancouver Forest Region and later the Ministry of Environment (of many names).

What do you do?

After 30 years with the provincial government, Bruce took early retirement in March 2004 to enjoy life. Bruce is currently pursuing lifelong interests in history, archaeology, and geomorphology through travel. Bruce is not yet ready to commit to a specific activity but is considering a future in consulting, or perhaps as a Walmart greeter.

What has been your most favorite project experience?

The late 70s – early 80s were Bruce's favorite because of the abundance of field work (Bruce loves being in the field), the excitement of an emerging terrain mapping science, the funding for work, and the integrated approach to the work being done at the time.

If you could impart some advice to young DEGIFS members what would it be?

- "Don't piss people off"! Understand that what goes around comes around and that clear communication, whether it is amongst colleagues or clients, is the most important skill. It is a skill that can come naturally, or be learned, but that separates the educators from the academics.
- Keep everything in perspective. A stressful time due to economic downturns may lead to new opportunities, so be open to change.
- Maintain a sense of humour.

In your opinion how can APEGBC or DEGIFS better meet the needs of its members?

DEGIFS represent a diverse group of disciplines and backgrounds and is challenged as to how it addresses individual needs. Bruce feels that DEGIFS needs to ensure that it doesn't exclude other relevant disciplines such as water resources/hydrology and should also consider decreasing the focus/reliance on one market sector (i.e. forestry).



If you could be any kind of geomorphological event, what would it be?

Bruce figured that he'd like to be a geomorphic event that had instant ramification at the human scale and historically significant at the geologic scale (e.g., a volcano perhaps?). Bruce stated that geoscientists have the ability to look at longer time frames and are able to explain the relevance of historical events. He explained that nothing is static, there is constant change and continuous response, and that not one event can be singled out because they are all interrelated. "Where does it start and where does it end?"

2004 APEGBC AGM STUFF

AGM STATS

WOW – we've done it again!!! Once again DEGIFS had the highest attendance at the APEGBC AGM. Not only did we have the highest attendance – we also attended most consistently. We must also most certainly have the most spirit (and spirits!!!). Thanks for coming out. Yet another informative, fun and worthwhile adventure to attend!

A noteworthy highlight was being privy to Brian Chow fully clad in his spandex work-out attire.

On Thursday and Friday DEGIFS had an average of 64 attendees per stream (with the exception being the last session on Friday at 42 attendees).

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AWARD TIM SMITH P.Geo.

One of our DEGIFS members was honoured at the APEGBC AGM Awards Banquet. Tim Smith, P.Geo., received a *Professional Service* award for the many hours of dedicated service (sic) to DEGIFS and the Association. Well done Tim – yet again DEGIFS members are in the spotlight!

THANKS

Heather Blyth, P.Geo.
DEGIFS 2004 AGM Coordinator

I would like to thank all those who presented at the AGM. Everyone was professional, concise and made for a very educational and enjoyable meeting. Thank-you.

AGM PHOTOS



Photo 1: Debris Flow or Debris Flood? This is the question. Elaho Valley Fan tour courtesy of Dave Wilford (MOF) and Tom Millard (MOF).



Photo 2: Advantageous roots. A friendly ghost for scale.



DEGIFS

The Division of Engineers and Geoscientists in the Forest Sector

www.degifs.com

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Professional Engineers
and Geoscientists of BC

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Photo 3: Butt Flare

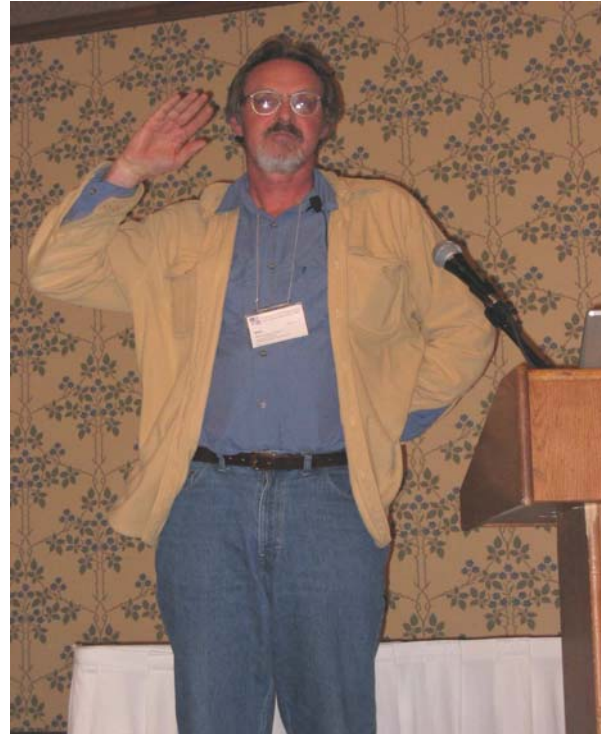


Photo 5: Bill Grainger pledges not to hurl the stainless steel vessel hiding his back



Photo 4: What's wrong or perchance what's right with this picture?



Photo 6: Kevin Turner demonstrates the art of hind-quarter assessments



DEGIFS 2004 EXECUTIVE ELECTION RESULTS

Congratulations and a warm welcome to the 3 successful candidates in the recent DEGIFS Executive election:

- **Mark Goldbach P.Eng.**
- **Ron Jordens P.Eng.**
- **Bruce Thomson P.Geo.**

During the November 30, 2004 DEGIFS Executive meeting, the new executive were officially sworn-in at the inauguration ceremony. A complete list of the 2004/05 Executive with their respective portfolios can be found on p. 6

We hope Heather is wearing the coveted DEGIFS Chair *Tiara* with pride.

Many thanks to Bill Grainger, Eric McQuarrie and Doug Nicol for all the work and ideas they contributed to the Executive for the past 2 years (Hopefully the years passed relatively quickly?!?).

Also, a big thank-you to ALL candidates that ran in the Executive election.

LESSONS LEARNED – My CBC Debut

Kevin Turner, P.Eng.

Earlier this year, CBC asked me for an interview to discuss the many debris floods and debris flows that had occurred around the province this past summer. Now, it's a rare occasion when a professional engineer or geoscientist is asked for an opinion, and being the humble and hard-working type we are, we tend to shy away from the attention. But since I had never been the focus of an interview before, I thought it would be a neat experience (read ego boost) and I agreed to the interview on Radio 1.

On the day before the "live" interview the radio station contacts you to discuss the topic. Presumably this is to see how the session will flow and enable them to prepare questions when on the air, presumably so the interviewer would sound more intelligent. A rather chatty lady conducted the pre-interview and she seemed genuinely interested, not at all dangerous. The next morning we then went live and chatted about hydrophobic soils, erosion processes following wildfires, the recent spate of heavy thundershowers, the debris floods and debris flows that occurred around the region, and the lack of attention to natural hazards

by some local governments. It became obvious with their closing remark to the audience "Do you think that the government should have a natural hazard policy?", that they had thought through the issue and saw it as the topic of the day.

Shortly after the interview I received a call from a different CBC program person with some follow-up questions. I gladly answered her questions, in more detail and somewhat more candid fashion - I was getting good at this interview business! It was not until I was told to state my name and position at the end of this interview that I realized this was to be used on the air as well. Shortly thereafter, a web story appeared on CBC's web page with some excerpts from the conversation.

By mid-afternoon, I was informed that I was being quoted every half-hour as the news headliner. "Not enough attention to slide threat, says expert". "No provincial agency working to predict where the next landslide might happen". Not only the centre of harassment in the coffee room, it was being made the focus of a lot of people around the province. I started receiving crank e-mails for the Okanagan. I was asked to give a lecture at the local college. A librarian from Lillooet contacted me. I started getting calls from the lower mainland. Several colleagues called to congratulate or harass me.

One thing you need to know is that political organizations *really* do not like being blind-sided by an issue! Communications staff in Victoria contacted me indicating that the Ministry and other government agencies were getting calls. Senior government people were unhappy. I was starting to sweat. A follow-up interview was designed to "kill" the story and I was going to help. Briefing notes were hastily prepared, along with official communications from the Minister. It was turning out to be a bad day.

I skulked home to listen to the interview for myself. It just so happened that late that afternoon the Forests Minister announced that the US appeal of the ruling against the countervailing duty had been dismissed. My story instantaneously disappeared. I was no longer famous. I never did hear the interview!

Despite my best intentions, I suspect it was one of the more stressful days on the job. I learned a lot from the experience. What I recall the most though were all the calls I received from my DEGIFS colleagues providing either support or to tease, and all those I really appreciated.



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Do Not Forget!!!

ASPECT SUBMISSIONS

LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO ASPECT	NEWSLETTER RELEASE DATE
MARCH 18, 2005	APRIL 1, 2005
JUNE 17, 2005	JULY 1, 2005
SEPTEMBER 16, 2005	SEPTEMBER 30, 2005
DECEMBER 2, 2005	DECEMBER 16, 2005

Electronic submissions in **Word format (only)** should be made to Julie Orban (julie.orban@gems9.gov.bc.ca) by the date listed above (no exceptions).

Refer to *Guidelines for Submission* on the website <http://www.degifs.com/guidelines.doc> for submission requirements.

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