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BRINGING NYSGA FIELD TRIPS TO GOOGLE EARTH

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Guidebooks for field trips organized by the New York State Geological Association (NYSGA) are available for all years since 1956. Those from 1956 to 1969 are available on the web as pdf files, and the rest can be purchased from the NYSGA (<http://www.nysga.net/Guidebooks.html>). In addition to containing descriptions of the locations visited, often with considerable contextual information, these guidebooks have road logs with directions on how to get from one stop to the next. We have begun to translate these road logs into kmz files which can be loaded into Google Earth or other GIS programs.

By seeing stops from all the guidebooks at once, with their brief descriptions from the road logs, a user will be able to quickly identify the relevant guidebook to learn what else was said. In many cases these guidebooks provide the best descriptions available of the outcrops, etc., at the time of the field trip. Our initial efforts focus on bringing these datasets into Google Earth, but eventually we anticipate involving users in updating information about individual stops, providing current and historic photographs, etc.

Bringing these logs into Google Earth permits the data they contain to be used in new ways. Users can construct their own trip by copying stops from various trips and pasting them into a new trip. Google Earth's search function permits users to find every stop where some word, e.g. "dike" or "brachiopod," occurs in the name for that stop. And of course the imagery, relief, measurement and other tools available in Google Earth enhance the guidebook descriptions.

Each guidebook was compiled by a "Host Institution," with many of these colleges and universities providing this service repeatedly. Field trips may extend many tens of miles, starting points vary, and many do not begin at the Host Institutions. One author may contribute field trips for conferences sponsored by several different hosts. Consequently, much of the state is covered by more than one trip. A stop may be revisited many times: sometimes by the same geologist, whose views may evolve; sometimes by different geologists, whose views may conflict. Although not comparable to actually participating in the field trips, the experience of viewing all of the interpretations of a single location is very educational.

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