

2009

Summary of the beginnings of the Ice Age Floods Institute

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The story begins in 1993 with the Ice Age Floods Task Force. This was a group of mostly government agency folks who felt the story of the floods needed to be told. The leader for the group was Gary Kuiper who was about to retire as superintendent of the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area. Those that were at the first meeting were Roy Breckenridge, Idaho Geological Survey, Eugene Kiver and Dale Stradling, Eastern Washington University, Bryan Rowder, Idaho State Parks; Jim Sheldon and Norman Smyers, US Forest Service, and Richard Waitt, US Geological Survey.

The Task Force soon concluded that what was needed was a non-governmental organization to go after funds for recognition of the ice age floods story. The first person they contacted was Mikki Kison of Ritzville who had been involved in creating programs for school classrooms that taught the relevance of the channeled scablands and the ice age floods. Starting in February 1994, working with Dan Brown and Gerry Tays of the National Park Service (NPS) organizing the Institute got underway. At this time, Dan Brown had contracted with Washington State University to produce the Great Floods video.

The first directors included Kison, who became the first president, John Rankin of Ritzville, Bill Riley of Soap Lake, and Karen Wagner of Moses Lake. John Rankin is a commercial artist and designed the logo and printed T-shirts as a money maker for the Institute. Karen Wagner became the second president who was followed by Dale Middleton of Seattle. Dale was responsible for developing the chapter concept. Dale was followed in the presidency by Gary Kleinknecht of Kennewick.

Other founding members were Dean Ladd of Spokane who was the vice president for a number of years and Jim Pritchard of Ephrata who was treasurer until 2004. Norman Smyers with the US Forest Service in Missoula has been very important to the Institute by keeping the group mindful that Joseph Pardee, of the US Geological Survey, as the one who figured out where the floodwaters came from.

Early on the Institute tried to put out a newsletter each quarter. The first editor was John Rankin. He was followed by Dale Middleton. Signe Wurstner and Scott Waichler took over as editors in 2003.

The first educational project was the brochure title: "Can You Feel the Thunder?" Much of the funding for the brochure came from the Grant County, Washington Tourism commission. The Institute Website was established in 1998 at the University of Idaho and was hosted by the Idaho Geological Survey. This site was later reconstructed in its present form.

In 1999, the NPS received funds to conduct a "Study of Alternative and Environmental Assessment: Following Pathways of Glacial Lake Missoula Floods." Members of the Institute selected the geologic sites and the volunteers from the general public wrote descriptions of them. The study was published in 2001 and presented to the Secretary of the Interior. The recommendation was that an ice age floods national geological trail be created.

A second updated ice age floods brochure was published in 2004. Member Susan Sprague designed and edited that brochure. It was again funded by Grant County Tourism Commission. In the summer of 2004, legislation was introduced in the House by Congressman Richard "Doc" Hastings. This was followed by similar legislation in the Senate by Senator Maria Cantwell. There were a number of members of the congressional delegations from the northwest states who signed on as co-sponsors. The Congress authorized the establishment of the Ice Age National Geologic Trail in 2009 after five years of promotion by many individuals and groups.

List of ice age floods documents and papers
held by Jim Pritchard

Magnificent Frenchman Coulee & the Ice-Age Floods—Bruce Bjornstad 2005

Floods Noah Had Nothing to do with—Marvin McCamey no date

Number & size of last glacial Missoula floods in the Columbia river Valley between the Pasco Basin, Washington and Portland, Oregon—Gerardo Benito & Jim O'Connor no date

The sag Flow out: A Newly Described Volcanic Structure 1970 Bates McKee & Dale Stradling.

A Review of Potencial Glacial Lake Missoula & Ice Age Floods Interpretative sites in Western Montana—Norman B. Smyers 4-1996

Geology of Steamboat Rock, Grand Coulee, Washington 12/1996—Christopher J. Crosby & Robert J. Carson.

Bulletin #45 Washington's Channeled Scabland by J Harlen Bretz

Columbia Basin project—George E. Neff

The Cordilleran Ice Sheet of the Northern Rocky Mountains & Related Quaternary History of the Columbia Plateau—Gerald N. Richman, Reald fryxell, George E., Neff, & Paul L. Weis 1965

Quaternary Geology of the Columbia Plateau—Victor R. Baker, Bruce N. Bjornstad, Alan J. Busacca, Karl R. Fecht, F. P. Kiver, Ula L. Moody, James C. Rigby, D. F. Stradling and Ann M. Tallman—1991

Geomorphology of the Northern Columbia Plateau—Dale F. Stradling & Eugene F. Kiver. No Date

Case for periodic, colossal Jokulhlaups from Pleistocene glacial Lake Missoula—Richard B. Waitt, Jr. Oct 1985

Lower Clacial Lake Missoula & Clark Fork Dams—Roy Breckenridge – no date

The Floods that Carved the West—Michael Parfit--. Smithsonian Magazine April 1995