

# Colorado Experience with Geotechnical Practice Publications

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Geo-Institute Chapters and ASCE Section and Branch geotechnical groups represent an important segment of the geotechnical activities within ASCE. For many practicing engineers, conferences within their local geotechnical group represent their primary professional venue for exchange of information with their peer group. These local or regional events provide an avenue for community-building within the engineering profession. The conferences are generally conducted in a single day, easily accessible, reasonably priced, and practice-oriented in order to attract a variety of attendees, including practitioners from private and public sectors, as well as young engineers and students. Across the country, these types of conferences, in total, are attended by two to three times the number of persons who attend national G-I events held each year.

Until recently, the proceedings of local geotechnical events have almost never been published within ASCE because the peer review process required for most ASCE publications is not compatible with the fast-tracked nature of most local events. Consequently, the proceedings of local events are usually published in non-archival documents, which vary widely in quality and eventually drop from circulation with the change in the volunteer group administering any one chapter.

In 2001, the Geo-Institute (G-I) established a new category of publications aimed at providing local chapters with a practice-oriented vehicle for publishing their proceedings—Geotechnical Practice Publications (GPP). GPPs differ from the Geotechnical Special Publications (GSP) used to document the proceedings of national conferences primarily in that one review (by the local committee) is required rather than two. This simplification facilitates the fast-tracked nature of the organizing process for most local conferences. It also retains the level of quality required for ASCE Practice Periodicals. Thus, GPPs become archival records of local geotechnical problems and practice that can be shared with other geo-professionals throughout the world.

Five GPPs have been published to date. One GPP contains the proceedings of a 2004 conference in Jordan

sponsored by the Jordan ASCE Geotechnical Group. Another GPP contains the proceedings of the 2005 conference sponsored by the Great Lakes ASCE Geotechnical Group. The other three GPPs contain the proceedings from the 2004, 2006, and 2008 biennial geotechnical conferences sponsored by the Colorado Section ASCE Geotechnical Group, together with the local chapter of the Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists (AEG) and the Colorado Association of Geotechnical Engineers (CAGE).

Colorado's experience with GPPs is particularly interesting because it demonstrates the practicality and benefits of GPPs for local G-I chapters. GPPs provide not only a vehicle for describing local projects in an ASCE-archived publication, they also facilitate and strengthen the exchange of technical information and experience with their local peers and with geo-professionals elsewhere. And key to geo-practitioners, they provide a documented and peer-reviewed source of information about the geologic conditions and challenges encountered in the local region and about the current state of local engineering practice.

For these events, the Colorado organizing committee (usually 10-12 people) has been successful using the following six-step procedure to prepare papers for publication for a GPP:

1. The committee establishes a theme approximately one year before the conference, identifies a lead editor and one or two assistants, and sends a call for abstracts to all the members of the sponsoring societies (i.e., ASCE, AEG, and CAGE in the Colorado Section's case).
2. After abstracts are accepted for publication, authors are given three months to submit manuscripts for review.
3. An anonymous local reviewer is selected for each paper and allowed a month to evaluate the merits of the technical content and the effectiveness of the presentation.

The members of the Colorado Section ASCE Geotechnical Group have become enthusiastic proponents of GPPs as an ideal vehicle to archive the proceedings of their biennial seminars for the geotechnical community. Using the six-step procedure, the editors have been very successful in soliciting and publishing papers about the geotechnical and geological problems that Colorado-area geotechnical practitioners encounter in practice, and in meeting the quality standards required for ASCE publications. This success has been supported by the expertise of ASCE's Donna Dickert, manager, proceedings production, who has made the GPP publication process relatively easy.

Using the experience gained from these events and publications of GPPs, the authors encourage other ASCE geotechnical groups to publish the content from their events to share

4. Authors are then allowed two weeks to improve their paper based on the reviewer's comments.
5. The lead editor submits the GPP manuscripts for oversight review within two weeks by the G-I Technical Publications Committee to ensure that the technical and editorial requirements of the GPP program have been achieved.
6. Three months before the conference, and nine months after advertising the call for abstracts, the lead editor submits the final manuscripts to ASCE for publication as a GPP, which is given to conference attendees as part of the conference registration. The GPP is also available for sale at the conference.

their local experiences and lessons learned with the geotechnical community.

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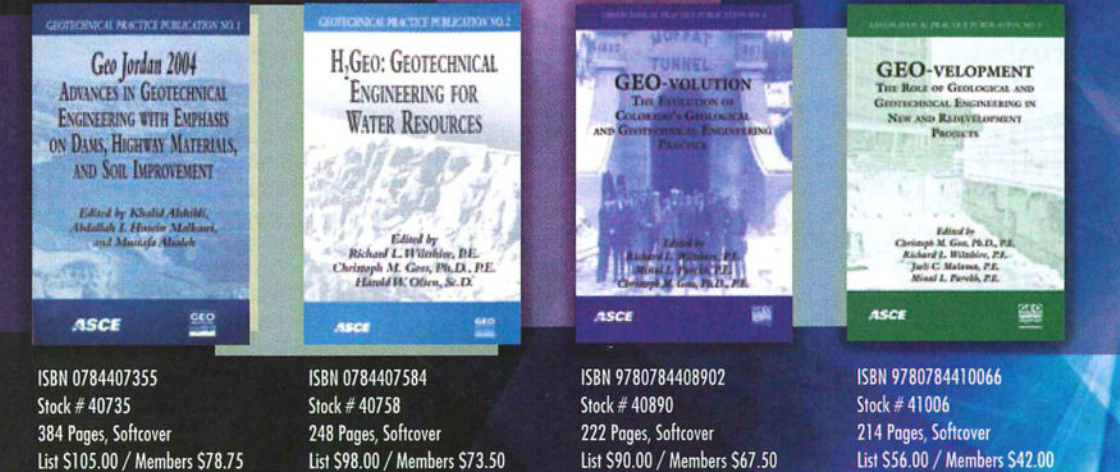
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