

Canadian Sedimentology Research Group — Second Western Canada Regional Meeting

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Volume 19, Number 3, September 1992

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/geocan19_3con01

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Publisher(s)

The Geological Association of Canada

ISSN

0315-0941 (print)

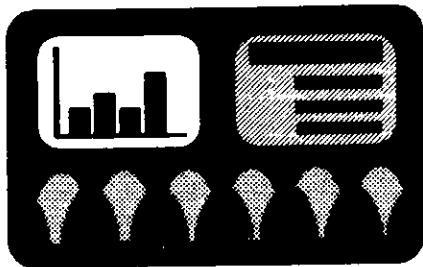
1911-4850 (digital)

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Cite this article

Hart, B. (1992). Canadian Sedimentology Research Group — Second Western Canada Regional Meeting. *Geoscience Canada*, 19(3), 142–142.

Conference Report



Canadian Sedimentology Research Group — Second Western Canada Regional Meeting

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The Second Western Canada Regional Meeting of the Canadian Sedimentology Research Group was held May 10-11 1992 in Victoria, British Columbia. The nation's west coast is home to a comparatively small group of sedimentologists working at provincial and federal government surveys, universities and private consulting firms. Research interests of the participants are highly varied, but include such topics as Quaternary studies, marine geology, basin analysis, sedimentary geochemistry, geotechnical studies of sedimentary deposits, and "environmental" sedimentology.

On the first day of the meeting, Peter Mustard (Cordilleran Division, GSC) led 23 participants on a field trip to examine outcrops of the Upper Cretaceous Nanaimo Group on the Pender Islands. Shallow to deep water marine conglomerates, sandstones and mudstones are well exposed in coastal outcrops on these rustic islands. Impressive examples of alluvial fan/fan delta conglomerates, thick turbidite sequences, graded conglomerates, sheet structures, clastic dykes, and submarine slope failure deposits were

kicked, hammered, picked at, mulled over, and (heavily) photographed by participants. The textbook-like quality of the structures seen in the outcrops, combined with the depth of Peter's homework into the local geology, left little room for controversy, despite the efforts of a few transplanted Easterners!

A day-long session of talks was planned for Monday, May 11 at the University of Victoria. Bruce Hart (Pacific Geoscience Centre, GSC) greeted the 30-odd participants and outlined the meeting's format. Bruce was followed by Chris Barnes (U. of Victoria), who welcomed all and provided an overview of activities at the University's new School of Earth and Ocean Sciences. Bruce began the talks with an examination of a massive failure complex on the submarine slope of the Fraser Delta. Olav Lian (Simon Fraser U.) presented an overview of the Quaternary stratigraphy of the Seymour Valley, north of Vancouver. Gerry Middleton (McMaster U., by way of Seattle) described alluvial fan deposits of Death Valley, pointing out that most accepted facies models for such deposits are based on geomorphologic studies, rather than examinations of stratigraphic sections through them. Heiner Josenhans and Kim Conway (both of Pacific Geoscience Centre) teamed up to present back-to-back talks describing the seismostratigraphy and lithostratigraphy of the Quaternary section on the continental shelf of Queen Charlotte Sound. The effervescent Mike Roberts (Simon Fraser U.) showed how stratigraphic studies of modern sediments (subsurface Fraser Delta) can be undertaken using geotechnical logs. Following lunch, Guy Plint (U. of Western Ontario) stealthily used some confusion regarding the equivalence of eastern and west coast units of time to present a lengthy keynote talk on the stratigraphic signature of eustatic and tectonic controls on sedimentation in the Alberta Basin. Peter Mustard, not content to have dealt with the Upper Cretaceous on the field trip, presented an overview of Tertiary strata of the Georgia Basin. Vic Levson (British Columbia Geological Survey) described subaerial gravelly debris flow deposits from the Canadian Cordillera, and echoed many of Gerry Middleton's comments regarding

problems on interpreting such deposits. Tom Pederson (U. of British Columbia) rather convincingly dispelled the commonly accepted notion that oxygen minima are responsible for the preservation of organic-rich sediments. John Luternauer (Cordilleran Division, GSC) rounded out the meeting by summarizing recent work on the sedimentology and stratigraphy of the subaerial Fraser Delta.

The high calibre of the presentations, combined with the open-minded approach of participants and a friendly, informal atmosphere, stimulated much useful discussion. The "cross-fertilization" that resulted from the presence of sedimentologists from eastern Canada led to a mutually beneficial exchange of ideas. It is to be hoped that future meetings in all parts of Canada will continue to provide this same mix of high-quality sedimentology and amicable social interaction.

Accepted 20 July 1992.