It's time for the 40th annual Minnesota Earth Science Teachers' Association conference!

Friday, February 5, 2027

Get to know your fellow Earth science teachers from across the state at the Minnesota Earth Science Teachers' Association Annual Conference. Concurrent breakout sessions feature master Earth science educators and noted geoscience professionals. Classroom resources will be provided to all attendees.

This conference supports the teaching of the MN Earth and Space science benchmarks articulated in the MN Academic Standards in Science.

7:00 pm Thursday, February 4
Eagle Lake/Onan Observatory,
Norwood-Young America, MN

$10 fee as noted on the registration form.
Reserve and pay in advance.

Dinner
(Local restaurant at your expense.)
The location and meeting time will be decided at a later date and will be noted in the conference confirmation letter you will receive in January.

Friday, February 5
MESTA Conference
8:00am-3:35pm
District 287 Conference Center
1820 North Xenium Lane, Plymouth

Minnesota Earth Science
Teachers' Association (MESTA)
3149 Alexander Lane
Mound, MN 55364

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

These hotels are near the conference facility. Call for prices and to make your own arrangements:
Comfort Inn Plymouth: (763) 559-1222
Crown Plaza Minneapolis: (763) 559-6600
Ramada Plymouth: (763) 553-1600

CLOCK HOURS AND TDE

Re-licensure clock hours are available at this conference. Consider connecting your professional development/TDE goals to teaching techniques and knowledge gained at this conference.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Conference event information:
Stephanie Erickson
(stepherickson76@gmail.com)

Conference registration questions:
Jess Strom (jessica.strom@orono.k12.mn.us)

PLEASE NOTE

Your registration is not confirmed until payment is received and you have received a confirmation by email. There are no refunds available for this conference after Dec. 31.

Minnesota Earth Science Teachers' Association
3149 Alexander Lane
Mound, MN 55364

http://www.mnearthscience.org/

REGISTRATION FORM

No refunds after December 31.

Please print.

NAME:_____

EMAIL:_____

SCHOOL: _____

PREFERRED ADDRESS:

_____

CITY, STATE, ZIP

_____

PREFERRED PHONE: _____

REGISTRATION OPTIONS

- ☐ $130 Basic Conference Registration
- ☐ $80 Pre-service Teacher /Full Time College Student

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION INCLUDING MnSTA MEMBERSHIP

- ☐ $155 Basic Conference Registration
- ☐ $145 First Year Teacher / Retired Teacher
- ☐ $90 Pre-service Teacher / Full Time College Student

COMPLIMENTARY BREAKFAST AND LUNCH

Note any dietary restrictions below. We will try to accommodate, if possible.

_____

_____

_____

OPTIONAL THURSDAY EVENING EVENT

- ☐ Add $10 if you will be attending this event.

TOTAL AMOUNT _____

To register by mail with a check (payable to MESTA send this form to

Jess Strom at **3149 Alexander Lane, Mound, MN 55364.**

To register online with a credit card, go to

http://www.mnearthscience.org/

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Alex Hastings, Science Museum of Minnesota

Giant Beaver: The Journey of Minnesota's State Fossil

State symbols are wonderful educational tools and opportunities, increasing awareness and instilling value for local natural heritage. Up until 2025, Minnesota was one of just four states in the country without a state fossil. The Science Museum of Minnesota held a vote with nine great candidates and the clear winner was the largest rodent ever in North America, the Giant Beaver. A multi-year campaign and massive effort finally and officially declared the Giant Beaver as Minnesota's state fossil. Learn about this amazing rodent of unusual size, its fellow Ice Age Minnesotans and the drama, determination and joy that ultimately led to this success.

Alex Hastings is the Fitzpatrick Chair of Paleontology at the Science of Minnesota. A specialist in fossil reptiles, he is widely recognized for his research on crocodile evolution and his role in discovering Titanoboa, the world's largest prehistoric snake.

Dr. Hastings earned his PhD from the University of Florida and is a dedicated science communicator known online as "Dr. Crocogator." Through his work, Hastings connects the public with prehistoric worlds, focusing on how ancient climate change impacted reptile biodiversity over millions of years.

THURSDAY EVENING EVENT

Reach for the Stars at Eagle Lake Observatory

Enhance your science curriculum and ignite your passion for the cosmos with the Minnesota Astronomical Society (MAS). Join us for an evening session featuring:

- A guided tour of the facility's technology from a member of MAS.
- Stargazing opportunities using the telescopes (weather permitting).
- Expert insights on observational astronomy for your classroom.

Don't miss this stellar chance to network with peers and gather practical teaching tools!

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Geologic History of Lake Vermilion Soudan Underground Mine State Park

Dr. Annia Fayon, University of Minnesota

At Lake Vermilion Soudan Underground Mine State Park, visitors can step into a landscape shaped by nearly 2.7 billion years of Earth's history. Ancient ocean floor rocks, towering basaltic lava flows, and dramatic geologic features reveal the powerful tectonic forces that helped assemble North America along the edge of the Superior craton. Capped by the much younger Vermilion moraine, these Archean rocks have remained exposed near Earth's surface for more than 2 billion years, offering a rare glimpse into our planet's distant past.

Growing America: Analyzing Data to Minimize Land Use Impacts

Heather Bryan, Nourish the Future

This session equips educators to bring data-driven environmental science into the classroom using Nourish the Future resources. Participants will engage in inquiry-based investigations analyzing soil, water, and land-use data to evaluate ecosystem health and human impacts. Teachers will learn to help students examine Earth system indicators, explain complex ecological challenges, and design actionable solutions using sustainable agricultural practices like conservation tillage and nutrient management.

Integrating Computer Science to Support Designing Solutions for a Changing Earth

Dan Voss, University of Minnesota

Learn about the middle school unit developed by Open Sci Ed. In the unit, students investigate case studies of several communities that are facing water problems such as increased flooding or drought. Hear how students can engage with technology to collect and analyze data about water, climate, and atmospheric changes. Digital resources will be explored and edited as students design devices that can be used as solutions to address water problems and carbon imbalances.

Impact Cratering on the Earth, Moon, and Beyond

Dr. Jennifer Anderson, Winona State University

Impact cratering is one of the main geologic processes that act on surfaces throughout our Solar System, forming the planets and dominating the first billion years of the Earth & Moon's history. Impact cratering has influenced the Earth's formation, history, atmosphere, climate, ocean circulation, and biosphere in addition to its surface. This session will discuss what happens during an impact event, the morphology of impact craters on the Earth and Moon, and how impact cratering played a role in the formation of the Earth and Moon. Participants will learn about impact cratering-related classroom activities and ideas that allow students to explore this important, exciting, and luckily not common (anymore) geologic process in the classroom.