

# **GEOFEST**

## **Frequently Asked Questions – with Answers**

### **What is Geofest?**

Geofest is a professional development conference held twice annually, usually in February and August or September. It is hosted by the South Carolina Geographic Alliance. Although most meetings are held in Columbia, other locations have been used as well.

### **Who may attend Geofest?**

Anyone may attend. In particular we welcome K-12 in-service and pre-service teachers dedicated to improving their geography instruction or adding geography to their particular teaching area. A typical Geofest meeting has 200-250 educators in attendance.

### **What do I receive for my Registration Fee?**

- Teaching and Content Session attendance
- Lunch
- Free teaching materials
- Free parking

The registration fee guarantees you a spot at the meeting, but not necessarily to ability to attend each session you choose (see Session Caps). The registration fee supports the staging of the meeting. The SCGA does not derive any profit from Geofest meetings.

### **What is a Content Session?**

A content session is a lecture-format presentation given by geography faculty, typically professors at the University of South Carolina. In these sessions, participants will learn about cutting-edge research in geography, or about other locations and issues throughout the world. Participants should expect to come away from the session with a better geographic understanding of the topic discussed; this understanding may lend itself to K-12 instruction but is not the specific aim of this session type. See Teaching/Lesson Session.

### **What is a Teaching/Lesson Session?**

Teaching/Lesson Sessions are presented by Teacher Consultants (TCs). A TC has received geography training by attending the two-week Alliance Summer Geography Institute. These sessions are typically geared toward three audiences: Early Childhood/Elementary; Middle; and High. Some sessions may span multiple grade levels. Participants in these sessions will become familiar with specific topics and materials and how to integrate them into their classroom instruction. These sessions differ from the informational Content Sessions. See Content Session.

### **Who presents Sessions at Geofest?**

All session presenters are volunteers. Content sessions are given by university faculty. Teaching/Lesson Sessions are presented by Alliance Teacher Consultants (TCs). A TC has received geography training by attending the two-week Alliance Summer Geography Institute. Vendors and other outside groups (e.g.: South Carolina Council on Economic Education) may also present at Geofest.

**Why are there Caps (attendee limits) on some Geofest sessions?**

Session limits are necessitated primarily for two reasons: classroom space and materials.

Multimedia sessions (e.g.: CD-ROM demonstrations) require computer labs with a limited number of machines and seats. Multiple sessions of this type are scheduled to allow participants access to these materials.

Some sessions, primarily those conducted by outside groups, are capped by the number of materials provided by the presenter. Where possible, the SCGA schedules these sessions in larger rooms and offers additional sessions to accommodate participants.

Other sessions may involve food or a 'make and take' exercise. Clearly limits are necessary given the special nature of these activities.

Geofest participants can help reduce the number of capped sessions by registering early. This gives the SCGA a better head count to prepare for the meeting.

**Why can't I sign up for Specific Sessions with my Registration?**

The SCGA does not have the ability to customize conference itineraries for over 200 participants. The program is often not finalized until just prior to the meeting (remember that our presenters are volunteers!). Multiple sessions are offered at the same time (often nine sessions at once), so participants are encouraged to find another session to attend if their first choice is full.

**When should I register for Geofest?**

As soon as possible! Earlier is better. The registration form is typically available at least two months before the meeting. By registering early, participants enable the SCGA to secure the appropriate number of materials and reduce the number of sessions that have caps (attendee limits).

**What materials can I expect to receive at Geofest?**

Two sets of materials are available. The first set depends upon the sessions you choose to attend. You may receive maps, lesson plans, articles, or CD-ROMs. The second set is given out to all attendees. These include maps, catalogs and order forms from book and map company representatives, and materials produced by the SCGA (posters, CD-ROMs). All materials are free of charge and vary from one meeting to the next.

**How do I get to Geofest?**

A map of the Columbia area and the USC campus are provided on the SCGA website. Written directions to the Bull Street Garage and the Callcott Building are also provided.

**Parking**

Parking is available free of charge to all participants in the Bull Street Garage next to the Callcott Building.