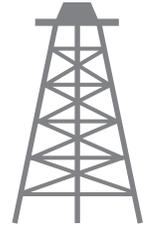




Pacific Petroleum Geology



NEWSLETTER

Pacific Section • American Association of Petroleum Geologists

November and December 2025



**2026 Pacific Section AAPG/ SPE Western Regional
Joint Meeting**



*Re-imagining the
Subsurface Energy
Resources for a
Prosperous Tomorrow*

**12-16
APRIL
2026**

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

LOCATION

Bakersfield, CA

**3100 Camino Del Rio Ct
Bakersfield, CA**

Double Tree Hotel

Registration coming soon!

■ *Energy lies beneath us- let's re-imagine how we harness it. Join industry leaders and pioneers to explore new frontiers in subsurface energy and its potential for a sustainable tomorrow.*

Visit <https://sjv.spe.org/26wrm/26wrmregister> OR www.psaapg.org FOR MORE DETAILS

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 president@psaapg.org
 daniel@ironhorseenergy.com

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 president-elect@psaapg.org

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Treasurer Simmie Chehal
 simarjitchehal@gmail.com
 treasurer@psaapg.org

Treasurer-Elect Lisa Alpert
 310-351-6977
 lisaalpert4@gmail.com
 treasurer@psaapg.org

Past President Amy Spaziani
 amy.spaziani@gmail.com

Editor-in-Chief Tony Reid
 661-303-7817
 tonyr0209@gmail.com
 editor@psaapg.org

Staff

Webmasters Mike Clark
 661-378-8134
 rocksniffer@aol.com

Kenton Crabtree
 secretary@psaapg.org

Membership Chair Simmie Chehal
 661-332-0369
 simarjitchehal@gmail.com

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Editor's Comments: The deadline for submitting abstracts for the upcoming PSAAPG/SPE meeting in April 2026 has closed. Over 160 abstracts were received and are being reviewed by the Technical Program Committee members, and authors should be receiving notice soon on whether or not their submissions are accepted for presentation. A large number of submittals apply AI applications to analyze data sets. Carbon capture and storage, geothermal and hydrogen are subjects of many abstracts. Conventional geology topics that have been the foundation of our meeting since the Section's inception, are also well represented in the submitted abstracts.

Submit an Article to the
Pacific Petroleum Newsletter!

- CONTACT THE EDITOR at editor@PSAAPG.org
- Images (graphics, photos, and scans) must be at least 300 dpi resolution. Text should be at least 600 dpi.
- Scanned photos, illustrations (line art) or logos should preferably be submitted as a .tif, .gif, or .bmp; .jpeg

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year Pacific Section!

Two field trips and at least three short courses are planned and well over 100 abstracts are in the Technical Committee hopper for review to populate the sessions for the PSAPPG – San Joaquin Valley Chapter of the SPE Joint Meeting, scheduled for April 11-16, 2026 at the Double Tree Inn. See the flyer within the pages of this newsletter for your path to register and submit an abstract or sponsor the meeting at any level or provide an exhibit. The planning and outreach efforts of the Organizing Committee are bearing fruit and the work continues: various technical audiences are coming forward with interesting talks originating out of industry broadly and academia; volunteers, field trip leaders, and short course instructors, to name a few, have raised their hands and are helping fit the meeting together in fine fashion. We are thrilled to see the response from the earth science and engineering community of not just the Pacific Section AAPG and SJV Chapter of the SPE but far beyond our usual sphere of influence. This will be our first in-person meeting since 2019 and we are striving to create as much intellectual interest as possible, combined with a long overdue time of seeing old friends, meeting new ones, and generally enjoying the camaraderie of being back together again.



To augment the meeting with a very interesting and we hope intriguing element: we will hold a panel discussion, tentatively titled “Energy Policy, State of Play, and Outlook”. Participants we have thus far include: Edward Ring of the California Policy Center and weekly writer for the California Globe dealing with energy and water issues; Lorelei Oviatt, Director Kern County’s Planning & Natural Resources Department, recently heavily engaged in getting State Bill 237 passed; and Shawn Kerns, retired COO of California Resource Corp., and current managing partner at Cornerstone Engineering. There will be at least one additional member of the panel, undoubtedly by press time at the next newsletter.

From our family to yours, we wish you memorable family time, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Dan

Photo: No, Dan is not sitting on the floor of his dining room. He is at the Board, a museum of contemporary art in downtown Los Angeles.



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Advertise in the PSAAPG Newsletter

The Pacific Section- AAPG is revamping the advertisements included in the newsletter. This includes:

- New lower rates
- New submission method
- New multiple avenues of advertising

Members	Single Issue	Year (6 issues)
Full Page	\$100	\$250
Half Page	\$50	\$125
Business Card	\$30	\$75

The PSAAPG will have a new form for you to submit your advertisement and payment. Link to form will be posted on PSAAPG Website and emailed to members and friends of PSAAPG soon.

What can you submit?

Market your business whether it be for geologic consulting, field trips, educational training/ courses.

Where will your advertisement be placed?

PSAAPG Newsletter (single issue and year-round package)

PSAAPG Website (year-round package only)

PSAAPG LinkedIn page (single issue and year-round package)

LA Basin Subsurface Data Center Archives

Email from Richard Behl on the move of archives at CSULB to the Core Repository at CSUB

The LA Basin Subsurface Data Center archives were packed and loaded this morning. The moving crew did a great job. They will arrive in Bakersfield tomorrow (Wednesday December 17). The state Department of Conservation/Geological Survey is paying for the container, purchase and installation of the shelving and the move. The PS-AAPG Foundation has contributed to pouring the cement pad, and if needed, lighting and scanning...? Thank you. We also sent a decade-old, but scarcely used Nueralog scanner/printer setup.

Most of the bankers boxes contain ~14,000 Southern California well files from Chevron/Texaco/Unocal.

In addition to the Chevron/Texaco/Unocal boxes of well files, there are several other series:

- 11 Y-series boxes contain well files for the LA Basin from Robert Yeats. Files were taken from these and properly filed in the appropriate Chevron/Texaco/Unocal where space was available. These Y-boxes contain the files that did not fit in the Chevron/Texaco/Unocal boxes.
- 9 "M-series" boxes of Minerals Management Service (MMS) well files from the offshore of southern California (mostly Huntington Beach).
- 24? S-series boxes of well-organized, well- and field-files for the San Joaquin Basin that derived from The Ohio Company/Marathon and the well-known California petroleum geologist Russell Simonson. Irregular numbering so labeled alphabetically.
- 25 bankers boxes of paleontology/biostratigraphy (marked "P-series" or "Brabb"). These are originals or copies of biostratigraphic data from Chevron's Paleontology lab from an estimated 50,000 surface localities in California. A summary of the age and location from these are included in an Excel file that is part of USGS Open-File Reports 03-167, with data from 2500 wells in Open-File Report 2011-1262. However, these cartons contain notes, stratigraphic sections and other scientific data that are not included in the USGS spreadsheets. The California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco supposedly also has this same data set plus 80,000 foraminifera slides that the benthic stage determinations are based on.

4 file cabinets of microfiche and microfilm well files for southern California representing about 30,000 wells drilled before 1980, donated by Dr. Peter Fischer of California State University, Northridge. Trays of microfiche were removed from the wide cabinets before transport because of their weight and placed in 2 "Speedpack" boxes. There are also 10 smaller cardboard microfiche drawers/boxes placed into another Speedpack.



Boxed archives in hallway at the Data Center



Boxes on pallets await loading onto semi for transit to Bakersfield

From the *Bakersfield Californian*, Nov 21, 2025

Industry, county, state gear up for return of local oil permitting

John Cox

Three years after the last drilling permit was issued in Kern, local oil producers are doing test runs with county government to prepare for the resumption of local well permitting in early January, even as officials say it may take time to return to previous activity levels.

The county says it started hosting workshops to refamiliarize oil companies on the application process in October, shortly after Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a law declaring Kern's embattled oil permitting ordinance exempt for 10 years from challenges based on compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

Kern's Planning and Natural Resources Department has staffed up and begun training employees to handle incoming applications in January, after the law takes effect and the county finalizes matters related to a lawsuit that shut down local oil permitting in late 2022.

"There is a general excitement to be permitting again and to be able to submit permits," the department's acting director, Craig Murphy, said Friday.

Individual oil producers may rush to get their first local permit in years, but few expect a general clamor, for a couple of reasons. Companies typically plan their annual drilling program well in advance, and many local oil-field service companies closed or left the state during the permitting drought.

Hopes remains, though, that the new law will lead to greater investment in local oil fields, which in turn would result in greater property tax revenue to pay for county services.

Oil property accounted for 51% of the county's property tax roll as recently as 1981. It had fallen to 32% by 2014 before declining to just 9% by June 30.

"The hope is that (the new law, Senate Bill 237) is going to bring the revenue back," Kern County Assessor-Recorder Laura Avila said Friday. She noted the lack of oil-field service companies could slow down the recovery.

"We're kind of anticipating probably it will take a couple of years to actually see kind of some of the results from (SB 237) because of the time to permit, even locally ... and just to resume the actual operations," Avila added.

As the county gears up to process applications within about seven days, assuming there are no paperwork deficiencies, the California Geologic Energy Management division is doing the same.

A spokeswoman by email Friday said CalGEM staff in Kern expect reviews of the state's regulatory portion, covering what is known as a downhole permit, to take less than two weeks to process if nothing is missing from the application.

Following years of industry complaints about slow permitting at the state level, one of the state’s largest oil producers, Chevron, is among those getting ready for the resumption of local permitting.

Regional Corporate Affairs Manager Chanel Jolly said by email the company is working with the appropriate agencies to make sure it understands their expectations when the law takes effect. She declined to say how many or what kind of oil permits, such as well workovers versus new drilling, the company might pursue.

“We are encouraged by the (permitting) progress and continue to evaluate options for investment across a global portfolio,” Jolly wrote.

She acknowledged many oil-field service companies have decided to leave the state due to a prolonged lack of activity, saying, “We are working to better understand the local supplier market as we continue to evaluate our options.”

Murphy, whose position could become permanent pending a decision by the county Board of Supervisors set for Dec. 16, said his department has reallocated staff as part of a “re-education” process. He noted the county will have nine people working on oil applications, four of them permitting specialists.

The test runs he mentioned work both ways, he said, giving oil producers as well as county staff practice ahead of the return of local permitting. He cast doubt on there being a sustained flood of applications, simply because the industry has not had long to prepare for the change.

Information on Kern’s permitting process is available on the county’s website, <https://kernplanning.com/planning/kern-county-oil-gas-permitting/>.



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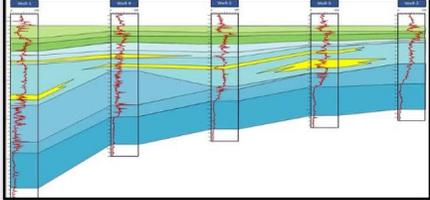


Whether it's Exploration, Exploitation, Infill Drilling, or CCUS projects:

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- *Integration of paleo interpretations will enhance the accuracy and reliability of the team's geological assessments*
- *Paleo results help to identify unexpected faults, unconformities, or facies changes.*

Experience and Background

- *Over 48 years of paleo expertise in the onshore & offshore basins of southern & central California*
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- *Familiarity with reviewing and reanalyzing older or legacy paleo data to maximize the available information.*
- *Workflow includes the integration of paleo results with geological, mudlog, and petrophysical data*



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From the *Bakersfield Californian*, Dec 20, 2025

New study recommends loosening California oil regulations to avoid skyrocketing fuel prices

John Cox

Increasing Kern County oil drilling as planned under a new state law won't be enough by itself to avert California gasoline price spikes, according to a new report out of UC Berkeley and USC that recommends revisiting onerous regulations and boosting production in Southern California and offshore.

The study says the new law giving Kern County environmental clearance to issue local oil permits, Senate Bill 237, will increase production by an estimated 10,125 barrels per day every year through 2030. While that's a good first step, it won't be enough, the report's authors wrote, because statewide production is declining annually by about 18,000 barrels per day.

The report blames the declines, together the state's shrinking refining capacity, on California's anti-oil policies and a generally "adverse political and regulatory attitude." Unless reforms are undertaken urgently, it says, fuel prices are bound to jump by several dollars per gallon.

"At best, SB 237 will help to slightly curb inevitable increases in consumer prices, but alone, will neither reduce nor reverse them," states the report by researchers Michael A. Mische at the University of Southern California and Joseph B. Silvi and James W. "Jamie" Rector at the University of California, Berkeley.

They concluded that the most economical way to make up needed production is to look beyond Kern County and make it easier for oil producers to also drill in the Los Angeles Basin and the Santa Barbara Channel.

The recommendations contained in the report are almost sure to be controversial given the environmental justice activism and conservation advocacy that led to the imposition of several new anti-oil laws in recent years.

A spokesperson for the California Energy Commission said by email Friday a combination of strategies will be needed to meet the state's policy goals in the planned transition toward decarbonization and greater use of renewable energy.

She noted the state's recent policy shift toward supporting Kern County oil production originated with the commission.

"In a letter to Governor Newsom in June of this year, the Vice Chair's office offered recommendations on how to stabilize petroleum fuel supply and prices in California while supporting the state's transition away from petroleum fuels in a way that protects consumers, workers, communities, public health and the environment," she stated.

“It will take a suite of strategies and policies to achieve these goals. SB 237 implements some of those strategies, one of which is stabilizing crude oil production in California, an effort to support in-state refining and fuel supply.

Additional strategies will be needed to meet the state’s policy goals in this transition, and the CEC continues to engage with a variety of stakeholders in further developing these options.”

The new study’s authors say declining in-state production has led to the unfortunate outcome of importing oil from countries with far lower environmental standards on ships that burn highly polluting bunker fuel and then crowd into California ports.

What’s more, Rector said in an interview Friday, reducing in-state production has allowed natural petroleum seeps to release large quantities of volatile organic compounds and methane, a potent greenhouse gas. He said tapping oil reservoirs below the seeps would cut such emissions.

The report doesn’t focus on that strategy but it does make the case that pollution can be reduced by increasing drilling and production.

“By prioritizing responsible in-state production alongside careful regulatory oversight, California can strengthen energy security, reduce both local and global pollution, bolster its economy and serve as a model for balancing economic, environmental and social priorities,” the report states.

There has been a recent rethinking of state oil policies because of word that two in-state refineries are set to close within months, reducing the state’s domestic supply of transportation fuels by 20%. That has led to a push for increasing refined fuel imports, either from overseas or other states, or both.

Beyond SB 237’s local oil permitting allowance of up to 2,000 new wells per year for a decade, though, no plans have been announced that would promote significantly more oil production elsewhere around the state.

The new report called for revisiting three specific laws signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom in recent years that have barred oil-field work within 3,200 feet of homes and other sites, raised bonding requirements when wells change hands and allowed municipalities to limit local production.

A bottom-line measure contained in the study is that California oil production, battling natural declines as well as anti-oil regulatory intent, has fallen by 65.3% between 2001 and 2004, while dependence on foreign oil is up 69%.

Another issue examined in the report is demand for oil. A realistic view suggests California’s reliance on petroleum will fall between 27% to 36% during the next 20 years, the authors estimate, noting that jet fuel is expected to rise in demand.

They wrote that only if aggressive action and deployment of advanced technology are brought to bear, consumption of crude will decline by as much as 49% over that period.

HISTORIC WELLS OF ALASKA: STANDARD OIL OF CALIFORNIA LEE #1, NORTHERN ALASKA PENINSULA

Robert B. Blodgett
Consulting Geologist/Paleontologist
Blodgett & Associates, LLC
2821 Kingfisher Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99502

Most of my earlier contributions to the Newsletter of the Alaska Geological Society have been focused on paleontology and stratigraphy. However, I also have a strong interest in history of early oil exploration in Alaska, and in this contribution I would like to present information (much of it never previously published) on the Standard Oil of California Lee #1 well on the northern part of the Alaska Peninsula. This well was part of the second wave of oil exploration (occurring in the 1920's) on the upper part of the Alaska Peninsula. It was spudded on March 19, 1923 and abandoned on April 7, 1926, having attained a total depth of 5,034 feet. This was the deepest and most expensive well drilled up to that time in Alaska. It and four nearby neighboring wells were part of the so-called "West Field", drilled in the 1920's near the southeast terminus of Becharof Lake atop the crest of the Ugashik Creek anticline (Figs. 1 and 2). Industry interest in this trend was generated by the abundance of oil (see Figs. 3-5) and gas seeps along the anticline crest [Capps (1923), Smith and Baker (1924), Smith (1926), and Blodgett and Clautice (2005)] and resulted in the interested oil companies along with the Territory of Alaska building a road between the abandoned townsite of Kanatak situated at tidewater on Shelikof Strait and the so-called "West Field".

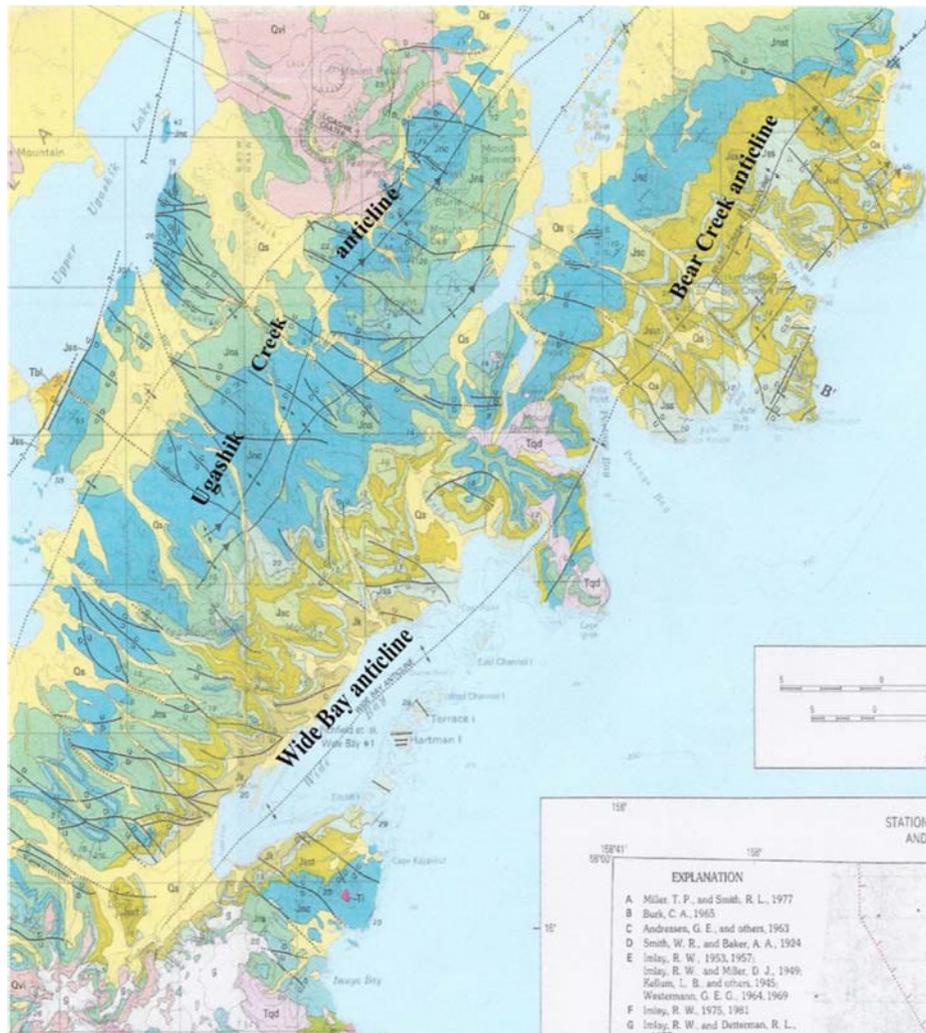


Figure 1. Map showing major anticlinal features in the northern part of the Alaska Peninsula (base map modified from Detterman et al.,



Figure 2. Panoramic view of the Pearl Creek Dome structure (northern end of the Ugashik Creek anticline).

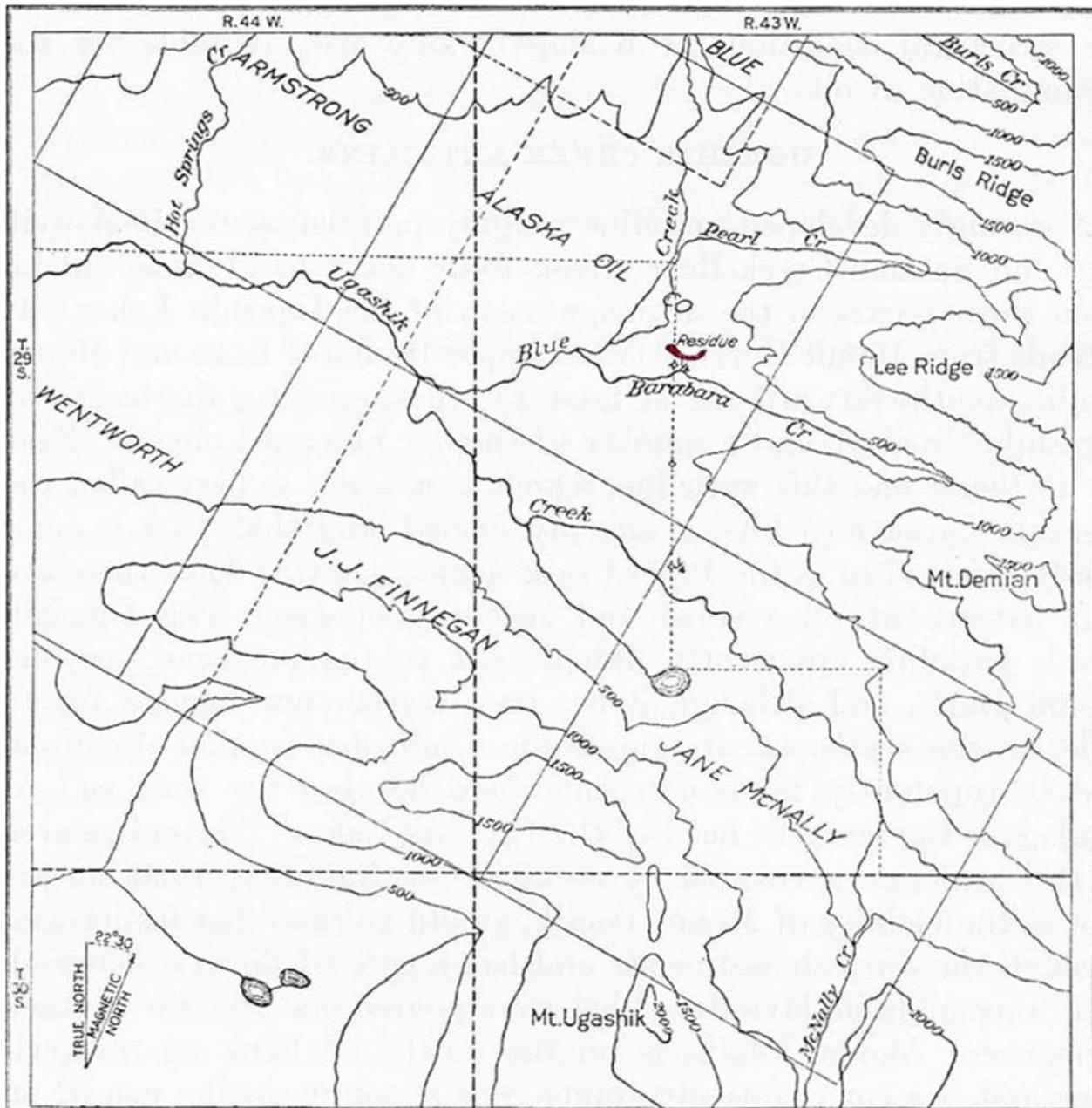


Figure 3. Map from Capps (1923, Fig. 6) showing Barabara Creek oil seep and correct original locations of Barabara Creek and Pearl Creek (note the current USGS topographic map of the Ugashik C-1 quadrangle incorrectly labels them as Little Ugashik and Barbara creeks, respectively). The oil seep is situated approximately 0.5 mile north of the Lee #1 well.



Figure 4. Oil seepage along lower course of large oil seep on north side of Barabara Creek (misabeled Little Ugashik Creek on current USGS Ugashik C-1 quadrangle topographic sheet). Seepage north of the “West Field” (Pearl Creek Dome) oil camp. Seepage referred to in Capps (1923), Smith and Baker (1924), and Smith (1926).



Figure 5. Oil seepage from upper end of large oil seep on north side of Barabara Creek (misabeled Little Ugashik Creek on current USGS Ugashik C-1 quadrangle map). This is one of the largest and most oil-rich patches at this seep.

“WEST FIELD” – UGASHIK CREEK ANTICLINE (OR PEARL CREEK DOME) AREA

The “West Field” consist of five wells operated by Standard Oil Company and Associated Oil Company during the Kanatak oil boom in the years of 1923-1926 along the crest of the Ugashik Creek anticline (see Fig. 1). All were drilled with cable tools and most were rather shallow, with the exception of the Standard Oil Company of California Lee #1 well which attained a total depth of 5,034 feet, and the Alaska Oil Company Alaska #1 which reached to 3,033 feet. All of these wells were closely situated to one another along the lower reaches of the WNW-trending ridge of Mount Demian and the base site for the drilling operations is referred to as “Oil Camp” on the USGS 1:63,360 scale topographic map for this area (see Fig. 6 for its location). This ridge is bounded on the south Ugashik Creek and on the north by Little Ugashik Creek as shown on the current USGS Ugashik C-1 quadrangle map (note that Little Ugashik Creek was formerly referred to a Barabara Creek in USGS literature of the 1920s)]. These wells are all more or less situated along the anticlinal crest of the Pearl Creek Dome which forms the northeastern terminus of the Ugashik Creek anticline.

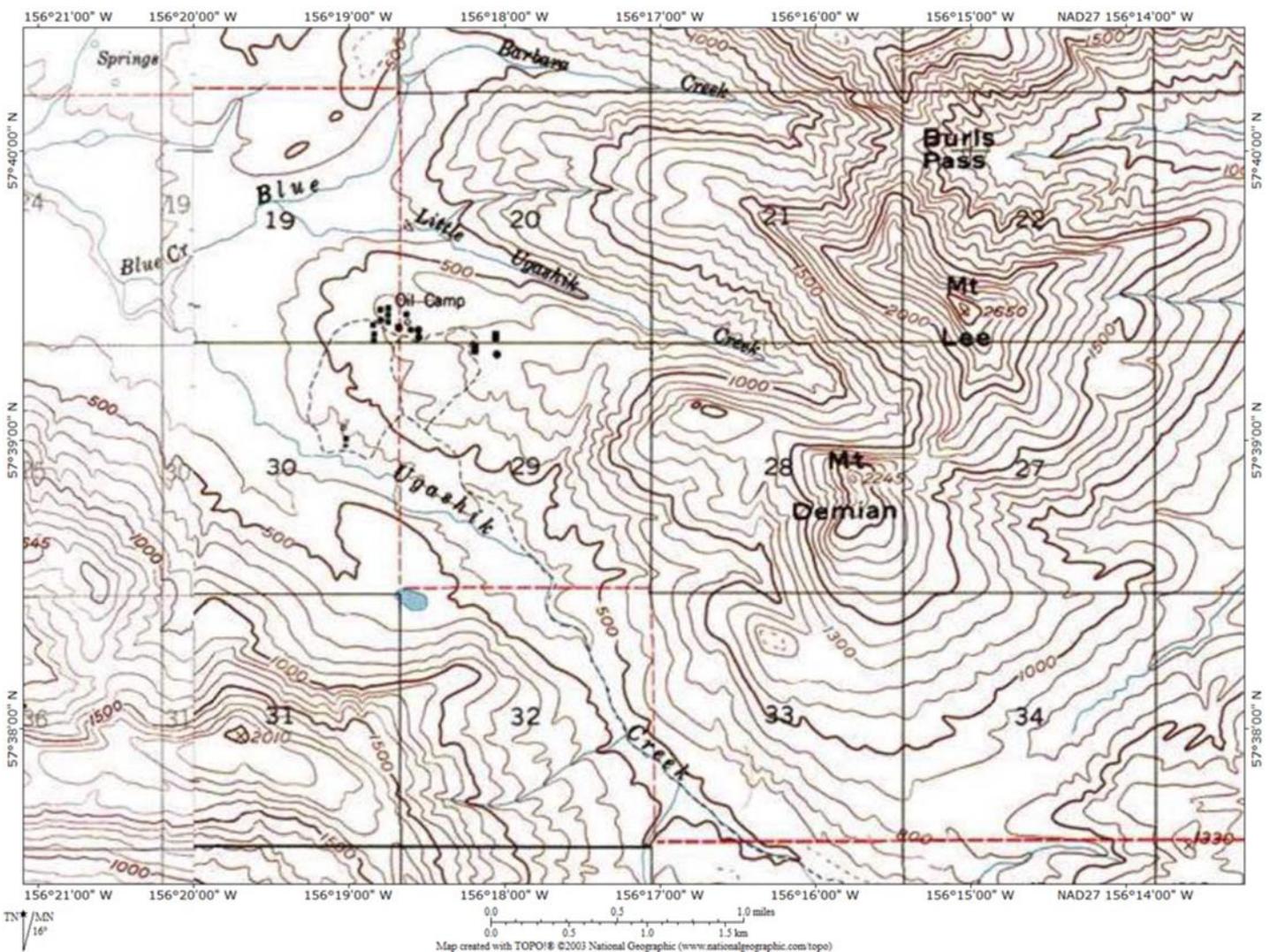


Figure 6. USGS topographic map for a portion of the Ugashik C-1 1:63,360 scale quadrangle showing location of the “Oil Camp”, the base camp servicing the five nearby wells which made up the “West Field” during the oil boom of the 1922-1926 in the Kanatak region. The location of road built to access the fields from Kanatak is shown by the dashed line. Most of the road is still visible from the air by helicopter and it would seem quite reasonable that it could be widened and improved given renewed interest in petroleum exploration.

STANDARD OIL COMPANY OF CALIFORNIA LEE #1

Miller et al. (1959) report this well as having been drilled during 1923-1926 and reaching a total depth of 5,034 feet (see Fig. 7 for photo of the drilling rig at the well site). They also indicated that it penetrated the Upper Jurassic Naknek Formation and upper Middle Jurassic Shelikof Formation with shows of oil and gas in the well bore. A major flow of gas was reported in the newspapers of the time at about 3,015 feet that caused a work stoppage on the well [The Alaska Daily Empire (Juneau), December 12, 1924, p. 2, article entitled: Heavy Flow of Gas stops Oil Drilling Work]. The well log given in Hanna et al. (1937) clearly indicate that the well penetrated at least several thousands of feet of the Upper Middle Jurassic Shelikof Formation before reaching total depth in the Lower Middle Jurassic Kialagvik Formation. An excellent historical account of the drilling and engineering activities associated with this well is given in Anonymous (1926). This article also mentions that a six-month effort was put into the initial road building (Fig. 8) to the drilling site from Kanatak (the same road accessed the other wells in the "West Field"). Portions of this road are still clearly visible from the air today and it would seem quite feasible that expansion and upgrading of this same route could be done in the case of renewed exploration of this area.

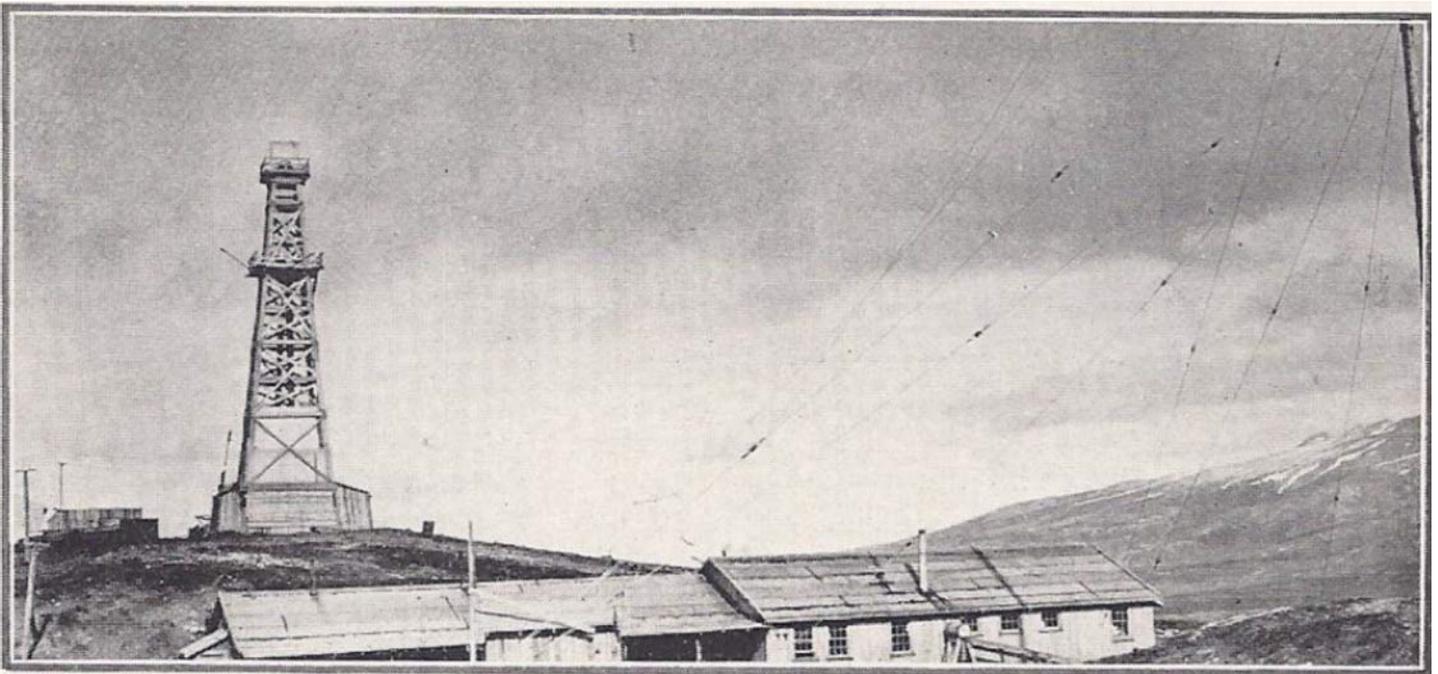


Figure 7. Rig and camp at the site of the Lee #1 well (from Anonymous, 1926). As noted in the same source "The location of camp buildings in a depression afforded some slight protection from the high winds, and undoubtedly contributed to their often being completely buried under the snow during a greater part of the winter months."

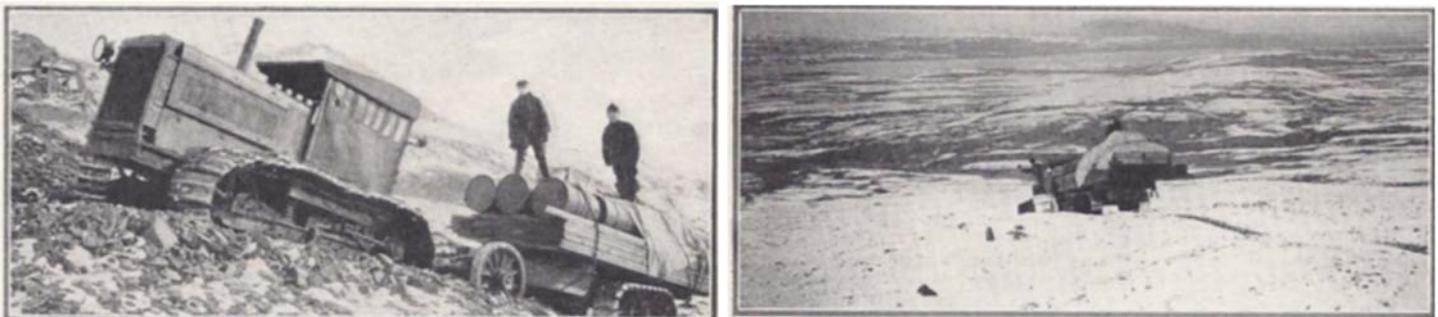


Figure 8. Two views of the road constructed between Kanatak and the Lee #1 well in the vicinity of Kanatak Pass (from Anonymous, 1926). Portions of this road are still clearly visible at present aerially from a helicopter.

In retrospect, the Ugashik Creek still appears to be a highly prospective site for future oil/gas exploration, given the well developed petroleum system evidenced by the abundance of oil and gas seeps, and the presence of significant gas in the Lee #1 well. The application of modern drilling technology (using rotary drilling and possibly fracking) makes this a still very attractive target in my opinion.

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Member Society News

ATTENTION PACIFIC SECTION AAPG MEMBERS

- Do you have a talk you would like to give at a Pacific Section Society meeting?
- Most of the Pacific Section Societies are searching for talks to complete their monthly meeting schedules for 2025.
- You are encouraged to contact the Societies and inquire about the suitability of your talk for their audiences.

Alaska Geological Society
www.alaskageology.org

P. O. Box 101288
Anchorage, AK 99510

Most meetings are hybrids, using Google Meet, and in person at the BP Energy Center. Doors open 11:00 am.

January 6, 2026:

Speaker: Richard Ness

Topic: Cook Inlet Tyonek CCUS Characterization

February 10, 2026

Speaker: Josh Barna

Topic: "Bridge over troubled tundra: Tracking ancient vegetation on the Bearing land bridge"

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President-Elect:	Holly Fair	holly.fair@conocophillips.com
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Coast Geological Society
coastgeo.org

P. O. Box 3055
Ventura, CA 93006

The Coast Geological Society has a new web site: coastgeo.org.

In-person meetings are the third Tuesday of the month at the Poinsettia Pavilion, 3451 Foothill Rd, Ventura, CA 93003

January 20, 2026:

Speaker: Joe McKinney

Topic: Carson City Landfill PCE Plume

President:	Bill Dinklage	coastgeologicalsociety@gmail.com
Past-President:	John Williams	jtwrockoil@gmail.com
Vice President:	Sabina Thomas	CoastGeologicalVicePresident@gmail.com
Secretary:	Nina Minga	CoastGeologicalSecretary@gmail.com
Treasurer:	David Arellano	CoastGeologicalTreasurer@gmail.com
Membership chair:	Phil Kinney	CoastGeologicalMembership@gmail.com
Webmaster/Tech Support:	Eric Heaton	CoastGeologicalWebmaster@gmail.com

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Los Angeles Basin Geological Society
www.labgs.org

Monthly dinner meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday at the Barrel Room of Four Sons Brewing, 18421 Gothard Street, Suite 100, Huntington Beach. Our Attitude Adjustment begins at 6 PM, Talk at 7 PM. See the most recent newsletter on their website for the latest details on upcoming talks and events.

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 15, 2026:

Speaker: Dr. Benjamin Hagedorn, Professor of Environmental Geochemistry, CSU Long Beach

Topic: Predicting Vapor Intrusion Exposure to Volatile Contaminants from Shallow Groundwater - A Case Study from Southern California

President:	Dan Steward	daniel@ironhorseenergy.com
Vice President & Programs	Rick Behl	richard.behl@csulb.edu
Treasurer:	Daniel Rice	ricedaniel@213@gmail.com
Secretary:	Joseph Landeros	landerosjd@gmail.com
Scholarships:	Karla Tucker	ktkr2@aol.com

Northern California Geological Society
www.ncgeolsoc.org

803 Orion #2
Hercules, CA 94547-1938

Meetings are at the Orinda Masonic Hall and online using Zoom on the fourth Wednesday of the month. Talks are 7:15 pm to 8:30 pm (social half-hour at 6:30 pm)

Next Meeting: January 28, 2026, Student Speaker Night:

Ziman Wu, UC Berkeley — Formation and Early Diagenesis of Bahamian Carbonate Mud

Ryan Lynch, UC Davis — Active Faulting in the Klamath Mountains Revealed by Lidar Data

Lena Felicitas Hernandez, UC Berkeley — The Hunt for the Leona Volcanics

President:	Jim O’Brient	j.obrient @ comcast.net
President-elect:	Tom MacKinnon	
Past President:	Noelle Schoellkopf	NoellePrince @ sbcglobal.net
Treasurer:	Don Medwedeff	donmedwedeff@gmail.com
Recording Secretary:	John Karachewski	
Membership Chair:	Tom Barry	tomasbarry@aol.com
Newsletter Editor:	Mark Sorensen	msorensen@gilbaneco.com
Field Trip Coordinator:	Will Schweller	willschweller@yahoo.com

San Joaquin Geological Society
www.sanjoaquingeologicalsociety.org

P. O. Box 1056
Bakersfield, CA 93302

DINNER MEETINGS:

SJGS meetings are on the second Tuesday of the month at the American Legion Hall, 2020 H St Bakersfield, CA.

See the SJGS website for information about the January meeting.

President:	Kari Hochstatter	khochstatter@gmail.com
Past President:	Ron Foster	ronleefoster@gmail.com
President-Elect:	Brandon Clark	
Vice-President:	Obinna Nzekwe	
Secretary:	Adrian Montoya	
Treasurer:	Alina Jack	
Webmaster:	Ivan Aburto	Ivan.Aburto@crc.com
HOD Delegate	Cynthia Huggins	Cahuggins747@gmail.com