

W. Thomas Straw
Consulting Wetlands Hydrologist
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W. Thomas Straw

Education

B.S. in Geology, Indiana University, 1958

Summer 1958 – Summer intern with Magnolia Oil Company (later Mobil Oil Company) in West Texas

A.M. Geology, Indiana University, 1960

1960 – 1965 Exploration Geologist with Humble Oil and Refining Co, Inc. – 18 months field geology in Kentucky; 36 months well-site geology and stratigraphy in Michigan; 14 months exploration geology in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, and Michigan.

Ph.D. Geology, Indiana University, 1968 – dissertation
“Geomorphology, Hydrogeology, and Economic Geology of the Ohio River Valley, Mauckport to Cannelton, IN.”

Summers 1968 – 1982 faculty member (1968 and 1969); acting associate director (1970—1982) Indiana University Geologic Field Station

Western Michigan University—Faculty member 1968 thru 1996;
Departmental Chair 1972-'74 and 1989 thru 1996; 1997 to present –Emeritus Professor of Geology

Certifications:

Certified Professional Geologist, Am Inst. of Prof. Geologists
Certified Professional Hydrogeologist, Am. Inst. of Hydrology
Certified Professional Wetlands Scientist, Soc. of Wetland Scientists

Memberships

American Institute of Professional Geologists (CPG)
Society of Wetlands Scientists (PWS)
The Nature Conservancy
American Association of Petroleum Geologist (emeritus mbr)
Geological Society of America (Fellow)
Working Men's Institute (New Harmony, IN)
Kiwanis International

Recent Activities

Wetland Scientist

February 2005—present: Moore Investment Group—wetlands delineation
2002-2004 Tri-City Investments, Virginia Beach, VA
1998-1999 Playa Vista, Inc. (investment firm developing former Howard
Hughes Aircraft Company properties in Los Angeles, CA
1995 – Michigan Peat, Sanilac County, Michigan

Expert Witness—

October 1999—January 2005 – USA v Adams Brothers Farming (settled)
October 1999—November 2004—Adams Brothers Farming v Santa Barbara
County (decision in client's favor)
April 2004—July 2004—USA v Construction Management, Inc. (summary
judgment for USA)
1997, 1998—USA v Raponos Investments (decision for USA)
1996-97—USA v Young, et al. (settled)
December 1995—January 1996: USA v James L. Wilson and Interstate
General Corporation (decision for USA, reversed on appeal, settled)
December 1992—USA v Hoffman Homes (decision for USA)
1991, 1992, 1993—USA v Mobil Land Development Company of Georgia
(settled in clients favor)

Wetlands Classes Taught (as part of a team with the Wetlands Training
Inst., Poolesville, MD)

May 2005 – Advanced Hydrology for Wetlands Delineation, Dallas Texas
(new course)

Wetland Soils and Hydrology, Kalispell, MT—September 2004, 2003, 2004,
2002, and 2001

Until recently I have very little interaction with other consultants, consequently, I know very little about the rate of pay for professionals at any level.

From the interaction I have with federal agency professionals I think a good way to “get on” with the U.S. government is to take a job with the IRS, yes, that’s right, the Internal Revenue Service—they are commonly (almost always) hiring for auditor positions (doesn’t require one to be a Certified Public Accountant or even a bookkeeper). Once on the federal payroll an individual can apply for any United States government job that is posted—and they all have to be posted (well, not “all”—obviously there is another route for some folks, The President, Senators, and Congressfolks—but there are lots of government jobs “out there”). Application for government positions is a bit tricky—they advertise the job, list the qualifications they are seeking in applicants, and then the applicants resumes are screened by a group of “professional screeners.” So, one must read the desired qualifications carefully, if the only background you have in one of the areas listed is that you wrote a term paper on it or a related topic—list that! You gotta be honest (just ask Martha Stewart) but don’t omit something because it seems trivial, or peripheral to the qualifications list. I have met several people who ended up in the job they wanted with the federal government following this pathway. The best example I know from our own department is James Stabler—Jim was unusually well prepared to be a National Park Ranger, he worked for the U.S. Park Service as a “seasonal” Ranger (read no benefits, not a permanent job) for several years, then he took a job with the IRS in Detroit—he had to work there most of a year, but he has been a National Park Ranger (Permanent job) for many years.

Yes, I know, who wants to work for the IRS? Well, it is a way to end up in a good job and be paid while conducting your job search.

Where ever your search leads you, “Good hunting!”