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ALEXANDRIA, VA - The American Geological Institute (AGI) announces the theme for Earth Science Week 2006: "Be a Citizen Scientist!" The year's Earth Science Week, October 8-14, will engage students and the public in conducting real "citizen science" research and help to spread science literacy.

"Citizen science affords everyone an opportunity to investigate earth science questions," says Ann E. Benbow, Ph.D., AGI's Director of Education and Outreach. "This Earth Science Week, we will be encouraging students, teachers, and the general public to become actively involved in a variety of citizen science programs with earth science themes. We hope that such involvement will highlight the value of Earth science in everyone's life and raise the profile of the important work that geoscientists do."

AGI invites earth science educators, professionals, and interested individuals to get involved now. For this year's Earth Science Week, AGI is promoting and facilitating a number of activities. Central to this year's celebration is AGI's efforts to engage students and other members of the community to collect data related to scientific endeavors, to make discoveries. As in prior years, AGI will be coordinating national essay, photography, and visual arts contests related to "Citizen Science."

Starting in August, AGI will begin distributing Earth Science Week education kits to support individuals and groups interested in holding their own Earth Science Week activities and programs. Also, the Institute is supporting public events, awareness efforts, discussion forums, and much more.

Earth Science Week 2006 marks the ninth year AGI has sponsored this international event as a service to the public and the geoscience community. Each year, local groups, educators, and interested individuals organize celebration events. The goal is to offer the public opportunities to discover the Earth sciences and promote responsible stewardship of the Earth. Earth Science Week is supported by the U.S. Geological Survey and other geoscience organizations. Learn more at <http://www.earthsciweek.org>

The American Geological Institute is a nonprofit federation of 44 scientific and professional associations that represents more than 120,000 geologists, geophysicists, and other Earth scientists. Founded in 1948, AGI provides information services to geoscientists, serves as a voice of shared interest in the profession, plays a major role in strengthening geoscience education, and strives to increase public awareness of the vital role the geosciences play in society's use of the resources and interaction with the environment. More information about AGI can be found at <http://www.agiweb.org/>. The Institute also provides a public outreach site at <http://www.earthscienceworld.org/>.

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