Communicating the Relevance of Earth Science with a Geological Highway Map[1]

H. V. Donohoe, Jr., B. E. Fisher, R. Raeside[2], K. Silverstein[3], D. Skilliter[4] and C. E. White

Making earth science relevant to various audiences including schools and decision makers is a major challenge. In many situations earth science information may not be appreciated for its value to society or worse, its existence may not be known. Keeping earth science relevant involves showing how it may be used personally and publically. The 'recreational use' of earth science information connects people with different backgrounds to earth science. When we make earth science 'fun' through such activities as rock, fossil and mineral collecting, field trips, and museum visits, we build interest and understanding in a broad base of the population. One of the vehicles for furthering this interest at a personal level is the use of specialized maps such as the *Geological Highway Map of Nova Scotia*. This map and others in use in North America invite people to become more involved with rocks, minerals, fossils and landforms. It relates the location of geological units, collecting sites, landforms and their connection to the underlying rock units, and outcrop locations to the highway system. Two editions of the map have already been published by the Atlantic Geoscience Society (AGS) and a third is due in the Spring of 2003. In the early 1990s the Government of Nova Scotia included the map in a four-part map publishing project. The combined sales of all editions have totaled more than 40,000 copies. The *Geological Highway Map of Nova Scotia* is used by the AGS in its annual EdGeo Workshops, funded in part by the Canadian Geoscience Council, for helping earth science teachers teach the Pan-Canadian science curriculum in Nova Scotia. The map is a companion to the AGS's much acclaimed book *The Last Billion Years*. University earth science classes and many senior high schools use the map as part of the course materials. Large numbers are purchased by residents and visitors to the province. This wide spread use contributes to a better understanding and appreciation of earth science. Interest and knowledge generated by collections, images and observations based on the map from Nova Scotia are transferable to other parts of North America. The map is a powerful tool in generating interest in earth science and thereby communicating the relevance of earth science.

[1]Presentation at the Northeastern Section, Geological Society of America 38th Annual Meeting, March 27-29, 2003; *in* Geological Society of America, 2003 Abstracts with Programs, v. 34, p. 87-88
[2]Department of Geology, 12 University Avenue, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada B0P 1X0
[3]6 Oakhill Drive, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3M 2T9
[4]Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 3A6