Meet Gretchen Schmauder

Gretchen Schmauder earned her bachelor's degree in geology from Western Washington University in 2001, after which she taught high school for two years. Deciding to go back to school, she earned her Master's of Science degree in geochemistry in 2005 at the University of Nevada-Reno.

She immediately went to work for Placer Dome at their Bald Mountain Mine, living in a man camp 100 miles from the nearest hamburger. She worked there until the first day the wind chill hit minus-20, at which point she began looking into the world of consulting. She started work at Terracon Consultants in Reno, Nev., in January 2006 and developed their nondestructive testing program, working on bridge and high-rise structure foundations throughout the country.

In 2010, while still working at Terracon and then Black Eagle Consulting, she began working on her Ph.D. in geophysics at the University of Nevada-Reno. She defended her dissertation in August 2013 and is currently the director of the Geotechnical Division of Optim Seismic Data Solutions in Reno. She has been involved with the Great Basin section of AEG since 2006, became Treasurer in 2012 and Chair in 2013. Additionally, she serves on the Advocacy Committee for the national AEG organization. She is a licensed geologist in California and Utah and volunteers at school functions to advocate science to the younger generation.

Gretchen is married, has a 16-year-old son and two very spoiled cats. In her free time, Gretchen enjoys gourmet cooking and traveling in search of good food. She recently went on a food tour of Italy, where she and her husband braved a narrow, treacherous route crowded with speeding quarry trucks up the Apuan Alps to the ancient village of Colonnata. Their reward? Lovely views of the Carrara marble quarries, a beautiful turned marble jar created by a local craftsman and the best plate of pasta imaginable, topped with the famous Lardo di Colonnata and local black truffles.

Photo: Gretchen visiting lithified dunes on Kauai.