**A Trip to the United States Geological Survey (USGS)!** <http://afieldtriptotheusgs.weebly.com/>

**Who did I contact?**

* I contacted Barbara at 703-648-4748
* If you prefer to communicate via email, visit [www.usgs.gov/visitors](http://www.usgs.gov/visitors) and follow the prompts on the “Ask USGS” tab

**Timeline for Preparation**

* I initially looked at the Social Studies Curriculum Framework for the early elementary grades.
* Knowing the USGS was located in close proximity to my residence and was a free site, I decided to explore the USGS website [www.usgs.gov](http://www.usgs.gov) to get a feel for its resources and environment.
* The USGS Visitor’s Center appeared welcoming and informative, so with Social Studies standards in mind I visited the USGS and brainstormed how I could apply the content of the standards to a visit.
* In about an hour I was able to explore a variety of displays and ‘exhibits’ and take notes on how to integrate the USGS Visitor’s Center Field Trip into a social studies unit.

**Costs Involved?**

* The entrance to the USGS Visitor’s Center is free!
* The only cost incurred are transportation to and from the center, the center is located very close to the Dulles Toll Road.

**To what content areas does it connect?**

* The USGS Visitor’s Center provides a unique location to see all major curriculum areas in action. Regarding Social Studies, the most obvious link is geography as the center provides a multitude of variations of maps. However, a variety of displays teach about history, specifically showcasing timelines, data, and artifacts. Additionally, experiencing the USGS provides awareness and brings meaning to the significance of civic responsibilities. Looking at the world from a universal perspective shows students the importance of global citizenship.
* This site ties in well with multiple Science standards as well regarding weathering, natural disasters, the water cycle, and others.

**What does the site offer students and teachers?**

* Aside from hands-on and authentic learning experience, the site provided me with a variety of freebies!
  + A list of educational resources for teachers
  + Variety of posters including poster-sized color maps
  + Notebook
  + Informational bookmarks
  + Calendar

**Other important logistical and educational information I discovered:**

* In speaking with the main contact at the Visitor’s Center on two occasions, the center may be losing funding! Due to budget cuts, the time of year, and the time of day, availability may be limited!!! Please call ahead of time to make sure the Visitor Center can accommodate your class before beginning to plan your trip!
* The site requires all visitors to go through a metal detector. Students and teachers should arrive at a minimum 30 minutes before your tour time!
* Due to security of the building, the school bus will not be able to pull up directly to the entrance, be prepared for a 5 minute walk.
* Students will be lead on a walk outside and should be prepared with appropriate clothing, I recommend visiting in the warmer months.