

## USGS at the National Science Teachers Assn. (NSTA) National Conference March 10-12, 2011; San Francisco, California



*Demonstrating the Greenhouse Gases exercise.*



*Explaining remote sensing products.*

The National Science Teachers Association's (NSTA) National Conference on Science Education is the premier event for science teachers and administrators in the United States, bringing together over 11,000 educators from the U.S. and abroad. The Exhibit Hall is a key component of the event, with over 350 companies, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies sharing their solutions and services.

The USGS exhibit booth at NSTA is an excellent venue for bringing USGS materials to the attention of science teachers. This year's booth highlighted our best educational products and websites, and featured several new education resources. For the first time, the USGS also incorporated full-scale demonstrations of classroom [activities](#) (using inexpensive materials) into our exhibit booth. These included:

- [Greenhouse Gases](#) – Four bottles of greenhouse gases, temperature probes, and a heat lamp.
- [Graded Bedding](#) – Plastic fluorescent light tubes containing water and graded material
- [What's in My Soil?](#) – Plastic fluorescent light tube containing water and separated soil.
- [Topo Salad Trays](#) – Using plastic takeout containers to build 3D models of topographic maps.
- Earthquake Board – Recreation of a Bay Area earthquake using wooden boards, screws, and tape.
- [Earthquake Information in Google Earth](#) – USGS KML fault and earthquake files.

As always, USGS posters and maps are in hot demand at this conference. Several of our most popular products, including an enlarged version of [This Dynamic Planet](#), were displayed on our backdrop. Other products included [The Geologic Time Spiral](#) and [A Tapestry of Time and Terrain](#). A [handout](#) listing all of our featured products and how to obtain them was very useful.

The [USGS Education Resources](#) handout was invaluable when introducing booth visitors to USGS materials. [Topographic maps](#), [satellite imagery](#), [hazards](#), [water resources](#), and [ecosystems](#) were all popular topics.

## The Japan Earthquake

The M9.0 earthquake/tsunami in Japan occurred late at night (9:46p Pacific) on the first day of the conference. The tsunami arrived at the California coast around 8:00a the next morning. The Exhibit Hall opened at 9:00a. We hit the ground running to prepare for the many questions that we anticipated about earthquakes and tsunamis. Stan Silverman from the Earthquake Science Center was on hand to walk booth visitors through the various graphics and information available online, including the [Earthquake Summary Poster](#). Stan stayed many hours later than scheduled to ensure that we had an earthquake specialist to answer questions. We were also able to bring in copies of [Circular 1187](#) on tsunamis. Fortunately, we already had a [hazards](#) handout with tsunami links and display copies of the Tsunami Preparedness in California [DVD](#).