

Welcome to Earth Matters – field notes on the geology of New Mexico’s enchanting landscapes. Celebrating Earth Science Week, I’m Dr. Maureen Wilks and I first became fascinated with rocks as a teenager hiking in the Scottish highlands, where some of the oldest rocks in the world can be found. I received my undergraduate degree in geology from Oxford University in Britain and decided to spread my wings and travel the world to pursue my interest in the origin of the continents. I received a Masters in Geology from the University of Saskatchewan in Canada where I spent two summers unraveling the story in the rocks near Thunder Bay. During my stay in Canada I was fortunate to visit Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks and fell in love with the Rocky Mountains. When I found out that one of the leading geologists studying the origin of continents worked at New Mexico Tech I enrolled in their Ph.D. program and spent two summers collecting rocks from the Wind River Mountains to better understand how continents grow. As I was finishing up I met my husband who introduced me to the wonderful variety of reptiles in New Mexico, and together we rescue and relocate snakes in and around Socorro. For the last 18 years I have been involved in ensuring the amazing volume of data on the geology, hydrology and economic resources of New Mexico housed at the bureau are being cataloged and scanned for ease of access and preservation for future generations. I use our extensive resources on a daily basis to answer questions from the general public about the geology of New Mexico and provide information from our databases and archives to rock hound enthusiasts, teachers, students, government agencies and industry.

Celebrating Earth Science Week, I’m the Geological Librarian of the Bureau of Geology at New Mexico Tech.