

Keep the Basics in Mind
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The recent decades have seen an evolution in the tools and technologies available to the geologist. We can now analyze enormous amounts of data and create beautiful maps, cross sections, and charts to show the computer generated answers. Unfortunately the ease of using these tools has caused some of us to overlook basic factual data in a prospect area in favor of computer generated displays of partial information. All data must be utilized. For example, a recent study of drilling on the Eastern Shelf has shown that wildcats that have been drilled on prospects based upon “3-D” seismic alone have been only 17.6% successful, compared to 90.1% success for wildcats where there was also a coincident structural anomaly in Permian marker beds as revealed by earlier mapping of actual subsurface data. There are many untested Permian anomalies in the counties of the eastern Midland Basin, indicating that there are many more fields to be discovered in these counties.

One of the worries that should be concerning the geologist today is the continuing loss of historical geological, drilling, and seismic information. Much of our older seismic records are lost or cannot be retrieved by the remaining seismic data exchanges. The geological libraries that hold our priceless well logs and scout tickets are being run with insufficient funding and staff to efficiently file and retrieve the data. Unfortunately some are just closing for lack of support. There are several commercial companies acquiring the data and placing it into computer form, but with large omissions and errors.

Finally, what can be done about the many well thought out but untested prospects that are in a geologist’s files when he retires?