

2011 MEDALS & AWARDS

E.B. BURWELL, JR., AWARD

Presented to
Lynn Highland and Peter Bobrowsky

for
“*The Landslide Handbook:
A guide to understanding landslides.*”
(2008); USGS Circular 1325.

Citation by David H. Huntley

The 2011 E.B. Burwell Jr. Award winning publication by Lynn Highland of the U.S. Geological Survey and Peter Bobrowsky of the Geological Survey of Canada (“*The Landslide Handbook: A Guide to Understanding Landslides*, 2008, U.S. Geological Survey Circular 1325, 129 p. Available online at: <http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/1325/>) is an innovative volume targeted at the non-technical community charged with emergency management, landslide mitigation and public education in both developed and developing countries, including lay persons interested in a comprehensive introduction to landslide hazards. The Handbook features detailed graphics, illustrations and photos from all over the world to emphasize the global nature of landslide hazards and threats to life and property; and so that the user can more easily visualize landslide processes and impacts, along with methods of mapping, monitoring and mitigation.

The *Landslide Handbook* is a globally relevant text. The volume was first released in English as a publication under the USGS Circular Series and posted online through the USGS website in a downloadable format, and an additional 1,000 hard copies were printed and distributed free of charge. Since 2008, the Handbook has been translated, with minor additions to suit specific audiences, into Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Spanish and Portuguese editions. The Chinese version was translated by Dr. Fawu Wang, Shimane University, Japan; and with the assistance of Dr. Yueping Yin is available in print and online through the China Geological Survey. A Japanese version, translated by Dr. Tamotsu Nozaki is available online through the Japan Landslide Society’s website. The Spanish version, translated by the World Bank’s Disaster Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, Washington D.C., is accessible online at the World Bank website, and in print from the World Bank. The Portuguese version was translated by Dr. Paulo Rogerio, from Pomerode, Brazil, and was edited and printed by the World Bank. A second English edition targeting a Canadian audience is now in development for release by the Geological Survey of Canada.

It gives me great pleasure to have nominated this unique effort for the prestigious E.B. Burwell Jr. Award within the Engineering Geology Division of the Geological Society of America. The support



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and endorsement provided during the nomination process by an extraordinary list of international specialists ensured that the peer recognition and acknowledgement that this publication warranted was duly received through accreditation of the engineering geology community. The authors and this volume will continue to serve the best interests of the landslide community for years to come by educating future populations and reducing the risks associated with landslide hazards.

Brief biographies of the co-authors

Lynn Highland is a Geographer with the U.S. Geological Survey Landslide Program, Geologic Hazards Science Center, located in Golden, Colorado. She began her career as an Anthropologist for the USGS Earthquake Program and after obtaining a Masters degree in Geography from the University of Colorado, Boulder, became Coordinator of the National Landslide Information Center and provides outreach support for the USGS Landslide Program and resources for landslide education and information.

Peter Bobrowsky is a Senior Research Scientist with the Geological Survey of Canada and has published widely on a variety of topics including surficial mapping, aggregate resources, till geochemistry, paleoseismology and landslides. He has served on several organizations and societies including Secretary General of International Union of Geological Sciences, International Director of the Canadian Federation of Earth Sciences and Vice President of the Geological Association of Canada. Dr. Bobrowsky also works and lectures in numerous countries around the world and often collaborates with USGS colleagues.

Response by Lynn Highland and Peter Bobrowsky

Landslides occur throughout the world, under all climatic conditions and terrains, cost billions in monetary losses, and are responsible for thousands of deaths and injuries each year. Often, they cause long-term economic disruption, population

displacement, and negative effects on the natural environment.

Although considerable literature and research on landslides is generally available, little of this information is accessible in a format that can assist lay audiences. Moreover nothing comprehensive at an *introductory* level has been published since the 1980’s. There are a number of excellent

texts available that are directed towards a technical audience that have been published by government agencies, academic institutes and the consulting community. Additionally, many other specific publications deal with topical landslide information such as landslide mapping, engineering, mitigation, monitoring and safety. However, no one textbook

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addresses all the topics collectively under a single cover in a public-friendly format.

To fill this outreach gap, the International Consortium on Landslides endorsed a project proposal entitled “A Best Practices Handbook for Landslide Mitigation” in 2002. As the project evolved, the aim became more comprehensive and targeted at the non-technical community that is normally charged with emergency management, landslide mitigation, and public education in both developed and developing countries, including those lay persons interested in landslide hazards. The Handbook aims to help the general public, home-owners, communities,

emergency managers and decision makers by taking the positive step of encouraging awareness of available options and recourse in regard to potential landslide hazard and threat to life and property around the world.

We are both fortunate and thankful that our respective employers, the US Geological Survey and the Geological Survey of Canada, provided support for the past few years for this project to see completion.

We are extremely grateful to David Huntley and the professional—technical supporters (Jerry DeGraff, Keith Turner, Laurance Donnelly, John Clague and Owen White) who provided a positive endorsement

of our work as part of the nomination process. We are also very grateful to the EGD evaluation committee for bestowing this award on our work. We are positive that their decision was not easy when comparing our work to other worthy candidate nominations. Within the geotechnical community, the E.B. Burwell Jr. Award of the GSA Engineering Geology Division carries with it considerable prestige and recognition. We cannot imagine a greater and more professional satisfying nod of approval from our peer community. Many thanks to our fellow engineering geologists from around the world who find this volume of use in their daily work.