THE EARTH SCIENCE CURRICULUM PROJECT

by H. D. Foth

The current movement in curriculum reform stems from recognition that many high school students possessed scientific knowledge representing an earlier era. The first major curriculum project of the current curriculum reform movement was started in mathematics in 1951. The Earth Science Curriculum Project (ESCP) is a late-comer to the reform movement having been preceded by projects in mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology.

Historical Development of ESCP

Interest in earth science in the secondary schools was renewed in the late 1940's in New York State where earth science courses were developed to bridge the gap between the junior high general science and the senior high biological science, chemistry and physics. The success of these courses led to the development of earth science courses in other areas of the United States. This resulted in a marked increase in student enrollment in earth science from less than 1% in 1950 to a current 6%.

In the fall of 1958, the American Geological Institute (AGI) appointed a steering committee to develop a six-weeks conference to develop teaching materials for earth science high school teachers. The conference led to the publication of a book entitled, "Geology and Earth Science: A Source Book for Elementary and Secondary School Teachers", by Holt, Rinehart and Winston Publishing Company. The success of this source book stimulated additional activities which resulted in a proposal to the National Science Founda-