International Association of Geomorphologists

11th IAG International Conference on Geomorphology

Christchurch, New Zealand, 2–6 February 2026

and

ICG2026 Young Geomorphologists Training Program

"Methods for assessing geomorphic processes and change"

Christchurch, New Zealand 30, January–7 February 2026

Report

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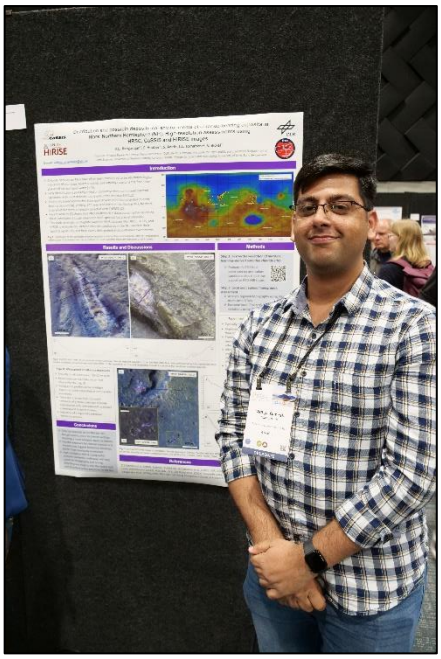
In early February, I had the opportunity of attending the 11th IAG International Conference on Geomorphology and events from the associated Young Geomorphologists Training Program in Christchurch, New Zealand. I would like to first thank the IAG for offering me a grant that enabled my participation in both these events.

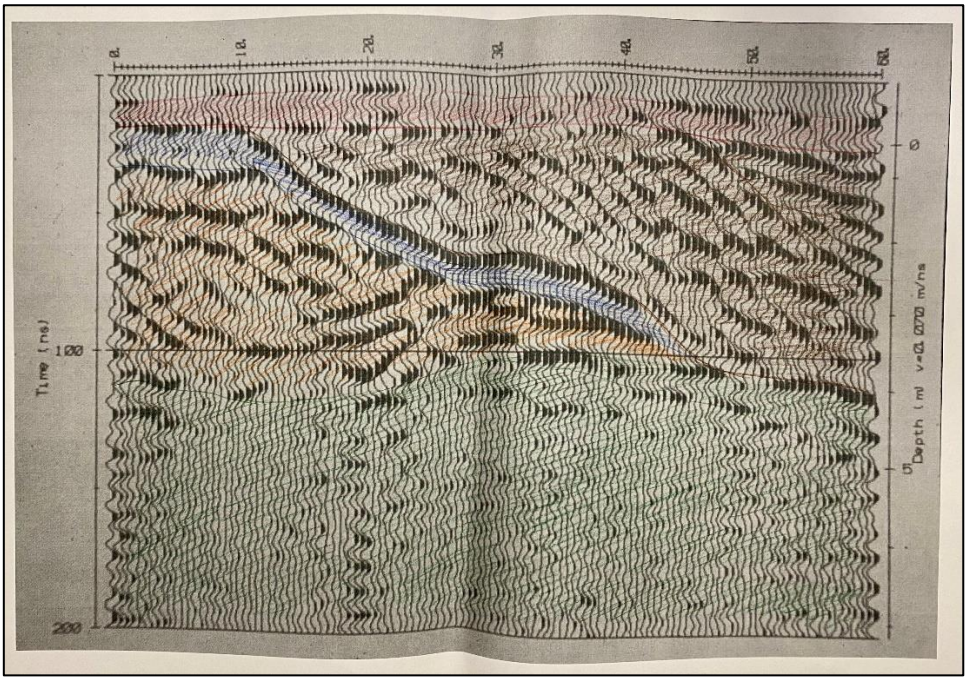


As a planetary scientist, this was a valuable opportunity for me to interact and connect with terrestrial geologists and geomorphologists, learn about the approaches currently being used to study geomorphic processes on Earth, and discuss how these methods might be applied to similar problems on other planets like Mars. While seeing such a large attendance at the conference was a bit overwhelming at first, the well-organized scheduling of oral sessions and highly interactive poster sessions made it such a joyous and engaging experience! I also had the opportunity to present some of our latest work on identifying chloride deposits in the Northern Hemisphere of Mars using recent high-resolution spectral and topographic orbital data. This work provides new insights into the timing of aqueous activity in the Martian northern hemisphere—an aspect that is still not well understood. I had many valuable conversations and received helpful feedback on our work, which I am looking forward to incorporating in the coming months. On the left is a photo of me next to my poster!

Apart from the sessions on planetary geomorphology, I was particularly drawn to those focusing on the evolution of terrestrial glacial and periglacial landscapes in a changing climate. As a cold and arid planet, Mars preserves a diverse range of geomorphic evidence for past glacial activity. I believe that the insights I gained from the talks and posters in this session would surely help me better interpret the processes responsible for the various glacial and periglacial surface expressions observed on Mars today.

It was also very rewarding to meet and interact with the large "young geomorphologist" community, either at YGT events or at post-lunch coffee catch ups in the foyer outside the session rooms. Over the course of the week, I built a lot of friendships and international academic connections, that led to several discussions around new ideas and collaboration opportunities.

I also had the opportunity of attending the day-long ground penetrating radar workshop hosted at the University of Canterbury on the weekend post the conference. I was greatly looking forward to this workshop, not only because this was my first opportunity to work directly with GPR data, but also to understand and get trained in methods highly relevant for interpreting subsurface radar observations for planetary surfaces. Further, this training felt particularly timely in the context of ESA's ExoMars Rosalind Franklin mission, where the WISDOM instrument will investigate the shallow subsurface of Mars, starting 2029. The workshop was a fantastic experience and included detailed sessions on the physics and principles behind GPR, and helped provide a strong theoretical foundation for understanding radar data. This was also complemented by a hands-on component, where we collected a GPR transect as a group across the gardens of the university campus and later looked at the processed radargrams. Over the course of the workshop, we also learned how to identify different radar facies in a radargram and how to develop plausible and well-reasoned interpretations from the data. Below is an example of a radargram I tried to interpret for the first time during the workshop!



Last but not least, some of the most meaningful academic exchanges often take place outside the formal conference setting, and the beautiful surroundings of Christchurch, and New Zealand in general, provided an ideal backdrop for such interactions! The discussions and engaging conversations on a range of research topics, with a variety of international colleagues either at dinner or during mid-conference hikes offered valuable opportunities to exchange ideas, gain new perspectives and strengthen my connections within the community, which I am sure, will definitely develop into future collaborations.

Thanks once again to IAG for offering me a grant that enabled this unforgettable experience! I would be remiss not to include a few photos from the beautiful city of Christchurch that hosted this conference and workshop!

A glimpse of the world-renowned Christchurch tramway system passing near the conference venue

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Beautiful view of Lyttelton with the backdrop of the Port Hills, south-east of Christchurch