

THE BIOGEOGRAPHER

Newsletter of the Biogeography Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers
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President's Column

As President of the BSG, Glen MacDonald wrote a pair of columns in 2000 and 2001 in which he reflected on the state of our discipline, including our past achievements, current challenges and future opportunities. In these columns (which are online at The Biogeographer website and well worth rereading), he clearly elucidated something that I've also felt for some time: biogeography is simultaneously thriving as a field yet at a very sensitive and vulnerable crossroads. We see evidence of the vitality of our membership on a regular basis in the grants we receive, papers we publish, committees and panels on which we serve, students we teach and mentor, and contributions we make not only to science but also to our communities and society. As the traditional model of the solitary researcher has been replaced by that of collaborative, interdisciplinary research teams, biogeographers have adapted and continue to be successful. In my career, for example, I've worked and published with as many or more ecologists, biologists and engineers as biogeographers. However, while we have much to offer as both leaders and members of research teams, there is no doubt that we, as geographers, must continue to demonstrate our value and contributions in the current atmosphere of interdisciplinary research.

On the other hand, I also concur with Glen's assessment that perhaps a greater challenge involves maintaining a lively dialogue and a sense of community within the ranks of biogeographers. At the same time that research endeavors are becoming larger and more interdisciplinary, most of us are becoming increasingly specialized. At Arizona, for example, we have four biogeographers on the Geography faculty (two Associate Professors, two Adjunct Professors), but our specializations are complementary rather than overlapping, ranging from remote sensing of wildfire patterns and fuel loads (Steve Yool) to reconstructing ecosystem history and environmental change in the western U.S. using a range of proxy records (Tom Swetnam, Director of the Laboratory for Tree-Ring Research; Julio Betancourt, Project Chief, USGS Desert Laboratory) to researching contemporary ecosystem and landscape dynamics using a mix of field, modeling and geospatial technologies (myself).

Within BSG, I see this specialization leading to a gradually widening rift between members in various research areas, a rift that is not one of a malignant nature but rather one of benign neglect. I not only tend to go to different professional meetings than my friends and students who are dendrochronologists, for example, but also to different AAG sessions. Thus, as Glen said in his Fall 2000 column:

“So there is the irony, our success in specialization and in contributing to areas outside of geography can invite a destructive fragmentation. Therein lies the challenge to the BSG and its members. We must both foster continued excellence in increasingly sophisticated research endeavors and education, and at the same time promote a general dialogue and sense of community. Are we succeeding at this? I am worried on this score

because the BSG, despite its successes, has not been growing in membership or profile within the AAG. We must do better. I invite you to ponder how we and the BSG can contribute to this goal.”

The purpose of this column is not, however, to discuss ways to increase the visibility of the BSG within the AAG or even to increase BSG membership, which had actually risen to 378 as of August 2003. These are things that are by-products of the work we do, the places we publish, and the ties that we make within and outside of the discipline as much as the manners in which we market ourselves. Instead I’m writing to make a proposal that I believe will address the crux of Glen’s argument, that is, to both build a stronger sense of community in the BSG and to help better prepare the next generation of biogeographers for the changing academic and professional landscape, a goal that should be one of the fundamental objectives of our organization.

As a graduate student at Iowa, I admit that I was not particularly active in the BSG, and I got to know relatively few biogeography students from other programs and even fewer faculty members. Those students that I did meet tended to have very similar interests to mine and continue to be friends to this day. My interactions with professors at professional meetings were generally cordial and supportive but often superficial. As members of the BSG, we recognize our role in supporting the professional development of graduate students through avenues such as the Student Research Grant Competition and the Student Paper Competition, but rarely do we tacitly acknowledge our responsibility to the broader professionalization of our students. The Research Grant Competition, for example, is a great program, but it recognizes only two of our students per year, and many of the projects are already supported by much more extensive funding.

To extend the role of the BSG in the professionalization of our students, I propose the election of a student representative to the BSG Executive Board. While the specific duties would be open for discussion, I see the student representative as being primarily responsible for fostering communication and interaction of BSG students, both among themselves and with the greater BSG membership. The representative can serve as a contact point for students, represent student concerns to the Executive Board, promote student membership, and solicit nominations and oversee the election of his or her successor. One possible model is that employed by the U.S. Chapter of the International Association for Landscape Ecology (U.S. IALE), in which one student representative is elected each year for a two-year term. Thus, at any given time, there is a continuing student representative and a student representative “elect” serving on the committee.

Beyond the value of having graduate student representation on a board that is currently composed of six faculty members (a chair, secretary/treasurer, and four board members) is the potential role that student representatives could have in promoting a greater sense of community, particularly over the long term. For example, IALE hosts a range of student activities at their annual meeting that are largely organized by their student representatives, including a student social, a Student Lunch with a Mentor, and a Careers in Landscape Ecology Forum. Through similar and other activities, it is my hope that we can promote a greater sense of community among our graduate students and between our grads and faculty. Further, increased interaction among graduate students from the various areas within biogeography will hopefully result in greater social (and potentially professional) interaction throughout their careers.

My request to you is thus to provide feedback on this idea. I will gladly collate and disseminate your reactions via the BSG Listserv, and if the responses are generally favorable, I’ll determine what would be needed to implement a student representative position and bring a proposal to the BSG at the Philadelphia AAG Meeting this March. To provide comments on this suggestion -positive or negative - please email me at kupfer@email.arizona.edu.

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BSG Business

BSG Annual Business Meeting: New Orleans

Finances: Scott Mensing

Unfortunately, the AAG has sent no updated account information since last spring. Therefore, the account balance is the same as was reported in the Spring 2002 report with a balance of \$1,916.43. This is sufficient to cover all anticipated awards and associated expenses for 2003. Hopefully we will receive the information on receipts by March or April at the latest. The updated treasurers report will be posted in the first available newsletter.

Newsletter: Duane Griffin, given by Ken Young

Kudos to Duane Griffin, in absentia, for putting together a great newsletter (applause). Please send any and all information, reports, photographs, updates on biogeography in your department, citations of publications, etc. to Duane for content in the next newsletter.

Duane wanted to point out that some people's email addresses are incorrect and when he sends out the newsletter, they bounce. If you have not been getting the newsletter, please contact the AAG because that is the mailing list we use. We have two avenues for communication. The List serve is for informal communication and is optional but we encourage you to join. Formal mailings are sent using the AAG email list. You will only be on this list if you have paid BSG dues. But if your AAG email is incorrect, we will be unable to contact you.

We are making an effort to submit BSG announcements to the AAG for incorporation in their newsletter.

Communication problems: Ken Young

Ken had a concern that there is no regular mechanism for input to the AAG on how specialty groups are operating. The new president should work on improving communication between the group and the AAG.

The question was raised as to whether we could publish the list of BSG papers to be given at AAG in the BSG newsletter so that people could be aware of these sessions. This request will be forwarded to Duane.

Election Results: Karen Arabas, given by Ken

Congratulations to the following winners of this year's election!

President John Kupfer, U. of Arizona

Board Members Leslie Rigg,

Joy Wolf,

Continuing Board Members Karen Arabas,

Lori Daniels

Our gratitude to the following outgoing officers who's terms end in June

President Ken Young, U. of Texas, Austin

Board Members Mark Cowell, U. of Missouri

Susy Ziegler U. of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Student Research awards

Fourteen proposals were submitted for research awards, 6 at the Masters level and 8 at the PhD level. Susy Ziegler headed up the competition. Since only 2 awards are granted, the competition is very tough – comparable to receiving an NSF award. Although the monetary awards are small, the award is a substantial achievement and vote of support from peer biogeographers. Several reviewers commented on the high quality of submissions and said “Wonderful grant proposals! I wish we could fund them all!” And another said, “I am heartened by the overall quality of the projects. It’s always hard to pick one or two as the best, which is a tribute to the state of biogeography in the U.S.” Thanks to all students who submitted and their advisors. And thanks to this year’s judges, John Kupfer, Joy Mast, Jim Speer and Catherine Yansa.

Recipient of the award at the Masters level – Joann Stewart from the University of Denver with the title “Influence of landscape characteristics on spatial patterns of bats within riparian habitats on the Great Plains.” Her advisor is Don Sullivan. Joann receives \$300.

Recipient of the award at the Ph.D. level - Chris Duvall of the University of Wisconsin – Madison with the title of “Spatial assessment of chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*) population and habitat in the Bafing protected areas, Mali.” His advisor is Matt Turner. Chris receives \$700.

Student Paper Awards

Mark Cowell coordinated judging for the student paper awards this year. Mark reminded the group that awards have been given since 1990 and thanked students for their willingness to participate and judges for their efforts at the conference. Judges this year were Robert Dull, Kim Medley and Scott Mensing for the Master’s thesis entries, and Curt Holder, Phil Keating, George Malanson, Don Sullivan, Ken Young and Susy Ziegler for the Ph.D. entries. There were two Masters students and five Ph.D. students in this year’s competition. Winners will be announced in the next newsletter.

Last years winners were Jacqueline Smith (MS) and Rosemary Sheriff (Ph.D.)

Cowles Award

Lori Daniels coordinated the judging for this years Cowles award nominees. Four papers were nominated this year, which attest to the quality in the field.

Mark Cowell and Jim Dyer. 2002. Vegetation development in a modified riparian environment: Human imprints on an Allegheny River wilderness," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 92:189-202.

Amy Hessel. 2002. Aspen, elk, and fire: direct and indirect effects of human institutions on ecosystem processes. *BioScience* 52:1011-1022.

Dominik Kulakowski and Tom Veblen. 2002. Influences of fire history and topography on the pattern of a severe wind blowdown in a Colorado subalpine forest. *Journal of Ecology*. Vol. 90 (5) pp. 806-819.

Rachel Clement and Sally Horn. 2001. PreColumbian Land Use History in Costa Rica: A 3000-year Record of Forest Clearance, Agriculture, and Fires from Laguna Zoncho. *The Holocene* 11(4): 419-426.

Congratulations to this year's winner, Mark Cowell and Jim Dyer. Judges were BSG board members (not including Cowell).

Please remember to submit nominees for both the **Cowles Award** (for best paper by a biogeographer published in the current year) and the **Parson's Award** for distinguished service to the field of biogeography.

Additional items of discussion

The AAG is nearing completion of the **timeline project**. They are concerned that specialty groups be involved, so if you are interested in the history of biogeography, please submit facts with associated dates to be added to the timeline.

The first biennial **International Biogeography Society** meeting was held this year in Mesquite, Nevada. **Glen MacDonald** reported that it was a truly international event, with many participants visiting from Europe and Australia. A wide array of issues was discussed, ending with a presentation by Jim Brown giving an overview of the discipline and proceedings. Glen urged that geographers join this society and attend the meetings to be represented in this broad group. Memberships are for two years and come with a discount to the online *Journal of Biogeography*. The next meeting will likely be held outside of Washington D.C. in Virginia. A good showing at this conference is essential to give the young society momentum. Glen noted that this is a great opportunity for mutually beneficial interaction and contribution between geographers and others in this field

The Image Project - **Lori Daniels** introduced the Image Project for putting photos of biogeographic topics on the web and reminded us that the deadline for contributing photos to this project is rapidly approaching (again!). To date she has 20 contributions but would like closer to 60. The deadline is the end of March. The photographs will be connected as a searchable web of sites and will be available free to all contributors. Please submit up to 10 jpegs with a caption to www.geog.ubc.ca/daniels. Currently the collection is best represented by photos from the tropics and arctic.

Dwight Brown biogeography book – Susy Ziegler announced that Dwight Brown and others have recently published a new text entitled *Alternative Biogeographies of the Global Garden*, published by Kendall/Hunt. The book will be ready for Fall courses and is the result of a course taught to undergraduates at the University of Minnesota.

Mark Blumler announced the call for papers for the 26th annual Applied Geography Conference to be held in Colorado Springs, CO Nov. 5-8, 2003. Biogeography and physical geography have gained increased representation at previous meetings and Mark encouraged us to consider attending. Abstracts are due May 15th. For more information, visit the site at <http://www.appliedgeog.org>

Peter Yaukey graciously offered his services to any member who needed information about New Orleans. In answering a question regarding West Nile virus he noted that he had seen no mosquitoes yet this year so we were quite safe. He also indicated that this was simply another hazard associated with fieldwork in the area, but that he still kept his eyes open more for lurking alligators. Thanks Peter!

AAG 2004

Next year is the centennial year for the AAG so ken asked us to all think creatively about what we might do to celebrate biogeography at this meeting. This year we had 18 organized sessions with 60 talks. Good job! The procedure for officially sponsoring a session is:

1. Contact the president for official sponsorship
2. Make it official when you submit your abstracts

Ken encouraged us to seek co-sponsorship with other groups to continue to widen our audience. Ideas suggested for potential 2004 sessions included:

100 th year Keynote sessions	Glen MacDonald
(Big issues such as Challenge of global climate change; Biodiversity)	
Dendrochronology	Jim Spear
Ecotones	Catherine Yansa
Fire ecology and the American West	Phil Keating
Cultural biogeography/Political ecology	Kim Medley
Middle America paleoecology	Rob Dull
Terrestrial carbon	Rachel Kurz
Paleoenvironments	Sally Horn
Hurricanes (wind impacts/disturbance)	Kam Biu Liu
Remote sensing and land cover change	Ken Young
Restoration ecology and oak savannas	Joy Wolf

Also – if you have field trip ideas it was suggested to contact Joan Welch who is in the Philadelphia area.

In typical fashion, Glen MacDonald ended the meeting by inviting everyone to a bash (this time sponsored by UCLA) to drink and celebrate geography, the conference, and the end of Mardi Gras.

The BSG welcomes new president John Kupfer and executive board members Joy Wolf and Leslie Rigg.

Thanks outgoing president Ken Young (center) and board members Mark Cowell (left) and Suzy Zeigler (right) for their outstanding service over the past two years.



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Awards

2003 BSG Student Awards

We are pleased to announce the recipients of the 2003 student awards sponsored by the Biogeography Specialty Group. The judges were highly impressed by the fine work of all the other participants in these two competitions. Thanks to the members of the BSG for their annual membership dues, which are primarily used to promote the continuation of high quality student research in biogeography represented by these awards.

Research Grant Winners

PhD level: Chris Duvall, University of Wisconsin, Madison, for research entitled "Spatial assessment of chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*) population and habitat in the Bafing protected areas, Mali." (\$700) Chris' advisor is Matt Turner.

Masters level: Joanne Stewart, University of Denver, for research entitled "Influence of landscape characteristics on spatial patterns of bats within riparian habitats on the Great Plains." (\$300) Joanne's advisor is Don Sullivan.

Paper Award Winners

PhD level: Rachel Kurtz, Penn State, for her paper "Impacts of land use change on terrestrial carbon in the Eastern United States, 1972-2000."

Masters level: Chad Lane, University of Tennessee, for his paper "Stable carbon isotopes in sediments as indicators of prehistoric forest clearance in Costa Rica." The paper was co-authored by Sally Horn and Claudia Mora.

Rachel and Chad will each receive a \$100 check in recognition of this honor.

Cowles Award

The 2003 Cowles award went to Mark Cowell (right) and James Dyer (left) for "Vegetation development in a modified riparian environment: Human imprints on an Allegheny River wilderness," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 92:189-202. ([Abstract](#))

Congratulations!



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Calls for Nominations and Participation

Nominations for Cowles and Parsons Awards

Please consider submitting nominations for the Henry Cowles Award for Excellence in Publication and the James J. Parsons Distinguished Career Award. To submit a nomination for the Cowles Award, please simply send the name of the person and the name of their paper/book. To nominate a person for the Parsons Award, send a short letter of nomination stating some of the candidate's most significant achievements. Please submit nominations by January 31, 2004. Information can be submitted via snail mail, e-mail or fax to:

Lori Daniels
Department of Geography
University of British Columbia
217-1984 West Mall
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z2

fax: 604-822-6150
daniels@geog.ubc.ca

BSG Board Nominations

The Spring 2004 issue of *The Biogeographer* will include election information for one president and two new BSG board members to serve from June 2004 to June 2006. Please send nominations to Karen Arabas by January 31st.

Karen Arabas
Dept of Environmental and Earth Sciences
900 State Street
Willamette University

tel: 503/370-6666
fax: 503/370-6773
karabas@willamette.edu

Salem, OR 97301

BSG 2004 Student Research Grants

The aim of the Biogeography Specialty Group (BSG) graduate student research grant competition is to provide partial support for graduate students to conduct quality biogeographic research projects for their Master's thesis or doctoral dissertation.

The awards are competitive, and proposals are judged individually on the basis of: 1) scientific merit of the project, including biogeographic significance of the research question and quality of the methodology; 2) organization and clarity of the proposal; and 3) qualifications of the student to conduct the proposed work.

Each applicant must be a student member of the AAG, and the proposed project should be part of her/his thesis or dissertation research. Normally, awards are made to one Master's and one doctoral student each year. Applicants may join the AAG now and become eligible for the grants competition if not already a student member. A committee of four biogeographers from different institutions will evaluate the proposals.

Applications must be postmarked or electronically transmitted by January 16, 2004. Announcement of the awards will be made at the BSG business meeting at the AAG Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. See the [AAG website](#) or [click here](#) for application instructions and cover sheet.

For more information, contact:

Lesley Rigg

Northern Illinois University

815-753-6838

email: rigg@geog.niu.edu

BSG 2004 Student Paper Award

The Biogeography Specialty Group sponsors two annual awards to foster recognition of outstanding student research and encourage student participation in the meetings. Competition for the award is open to undergraduate and graduate students (including those receiving their Ph.D. within a year after the dissertation defense). The two awards will be given to the best Undergraduate / Masters student paper and to the best Ph.D. student paper. The student must be either the sole author or the primary author of the paper, and must be the presenter at the meeting. Illustrated posters are eligible for the award.

Judging criteria include the significance and originality of research question, the creativity and quality of the methodology, the validity of the conclusions drawn from the results, and the clarity of the presentation.

If you wish to be considered for the award, please email the application form below and a copy of the abstract that was sent to the AAG in October 2003 to Joy Wolf at:

Dr. Joy Wolf

Department of Geography

900 Wood Road

University of Wisconsin - Parkside

Kenosha, WI 53403

email: wolf@uwp.edu

[Application form \(click here: MS Word format\)](#)

THE APPLICATION FORM AND ABSTRACT MUST BE RECEIVED BY JANUARY 31, 2004.

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News

Department News

Biogeomorphology at Kentucky

After a long absence, the University of Kentucky Department of Geography made a commitment to build a physical geography program in 2000. The program, focussed on geomorphology in its initial phases, now includes three full-time and several adjunct faculty. Strategic plans call for adding a biogeographer or landscape ecologist in the near future, pending availability of funds. In the meantime the existing physical geographers (Sean Campbell, Alice Turkington, Jonathan Phillips) have at least incorporated biogeomorphology in their teaching and research. Phillips, for example, is working with the USDA Forest Service on the coevolution of ecosystems, landforms, and soils in the Ouachita National Forest, Arkansas, in the context of the forest service's ecosystem restoration program. Turkington, a rock weathering specialist, is examining biotic weathering in general and the potential role of biota in creating complex weathered surfaces in particular. Campbell's studies in high-latitude environments include consideration of interacting hydrological, ecological, and geomorphological processes in solutional denudation. Phillips has also resuscitated the university's only biogeography course, which will be taught for the third time in Spring 2004 after a hiatus of several years.

For more information see <http://www.uky.edu/AS/Geography/dept/physical.htm>

[Jonathan D. Phillips](#), Professor
Department of Geography
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40506

phone: 859-257-6950

Kentucky geography: <http://www.uky.edu/AS/Geography/>

University of Minnesota

The little biogeography program in the Big Woods at the **University of Minnesota** is alive and growing. We are studying vegetation changes from the stand scale to the continental scale in order to examine dynamics caused by disturbance, climatic change, and the interaction between the two. Field-based projects from the Rockies to New England, combined with modeling and data analysis, are opening our eyes to fresh ideas. We hope to find new students interested in working with us.

Bryan Shuman, who joined the Department of Geography at the University of Minnesota in Fall 2003, is developing a research program to investigate climate and vegetation dynamics during the Holocene. Climate variations during the Holocene were substantial, spatially variable, and spanned a wide range of frequencies and rates of change. Although these variations are in part forced by drivers external to the climate system, Bryan is interested in the internal interactions among the atmosphere, oceans, and terrestrial biosphere that may also be a critical source and modulator of climate variability. In particular, a current project will explore what role vegetation-atmosphere feedbacks played in causing intense aridity in the mid-continent of North America during the mid-Holocene. The eastward expansion of the prairie and draw-down of lakes 8000-6000 years ago has been well documented, but the processes underlying these regional changes remain unclear. Potentially, when prairie replaced forest in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois, the change in vegetation increased the

regional albedo, decreased surface roughness, and decreased evapotranspiration, and thus helped to make the area drier. Bryan and colleagues have been supported by the NSF Earth System History program to combine the power of regional climate modeling with paleoclimatic and paleoecological data syntheses in order to evaluate the potential vegetation-climate interaction.

Bryan's work also includes documenting evidence of past lake-level fluctuations using lake sediment cores and radar profiles of lake sediment. Such records offer an important perspective on past changes in water availability, which Bryan has shown effected Quaternary vegetation history in New England. A new project, launched jointly with **Susy Ziegler**, will examine recent changes in moisture availability in Minnesota in order to better understand their role in the development of the Big Woods forest over the past 500 years. Bryan and Susy intend to investigate the interaction between climate (moisture availability) and fire for shaping the expansion of the closed-canopy forest where prairie had previously existed. To do so, they will compare lake sediment and tree-ring records of climate, vegetation change, and fire history across south-central Minnesota. A broad aim of this project is to better understand the interaction between forest disturbance and climate for shaping regional vegetation patterns.

Susy Ziegler continues her research on recent and contemporary forest dynamics in the Adirondack Mountains of Upstate New York. A current project is to monitor post-fire regeneration in a spruce–fir–paper birch forest. She hopes to establish linkages between climate (at microsite and regional scales) and vegetation change. Susy also focuses on ecotones in Minnesota. She is working with students at a sand prairie / oak savanna system at Weaver Dunes along the Mississippi River in southeastern Minnesota. The first project in Susy's **Physical Geography Laboratory for Tree-Ring Analysis and Soil Characterization** is to combine evidence from tree rings and soils to determine the natural variability of the distribution of oak savanna at Weaver Dunes.

Dwight Brown designed an introductory-level biogeography course that has grown over the past six years and now enrolls almost 300 students each semester. The goal of the class is to understand how climate, landforms and earth materials, soils, nutrient cycling, dispersal, disturbance, agriculture, and land management affect past, present, and future patterns of plants and animals. *Alternative Biogeographies of the Global Garden*, the textbook that Dwight Brown, **Phil Gersmehl**, and Susy Ziegler developed in conjunction with the course, was published by Kendall/Hunt in September 2003. It includes a CD-ROM with rich, colorful graphics and animations that support the text. The Department of Geography employs about seven teaching assistants each semester to run the lab sections of this class. Biogeographers wanted!

Dwight Brown, Susy Ziegler, and Gary Pereira (a U of M graduate student at the time) collaborated on a chapter titled "Embedded Scales in Biogeography" for *Scale and Geographic Inquiry: Nature, Society and Method*, a book edited by Bob McMaster and Eric Sheppard and published in 2003 by Blackwell Press.

Visit <http://www.geog.umn.edu/> for more information about the department. E-mail Graduate Secretary Bonnie Williams (willi046@umn.edu or call 612-625-6080) to request application materials, which must be received by January 1 of the year in which admission is sought. Please contact Susy (ziegler@umn.edu or 612-625-9354) and Bryan (bshuman@umn.edu or 612-625-8591) if you would like to know more about graduate study in Geography at the University of Minnesota

New Biogeographers

Aaron Rigg-Goldblum was born on May 11th, 2003, happy and healthy and ready to start field work.

Future BSG President (?) Paul Andrew Kupfer was born on Sep. 24, 2003.

Congratulations new parents, and welcome to planet Earth Aaron and Paul!

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Notes

Research Notes

Donate your computer cycles for species mapping.

The Informatics Biodiversity Research Center at the University of Kansas has developed the Lifemapper project, a distributed computing project for mapping species distributions and invasibility potential. "It uses the Internet and leading-edge information technology to retrieve records of millions of plants and animals in the world's natural history museums. Lifemapper analyzes the data, computes the ecological profile of each species, maps where the species has been found and predicts where each species could potentially live." Sign up, download the screensaver, and you can contribute to this research project. [Click here to go to the Lifemapper home page.](#)

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Course Notes

Study Biogeography and Biology Abroad At Oxford University, Summer 2004

This will be the 35th summer program offered by Northern Illinois University and Oriel College (Oxford University) featuring courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels that are designed to take advantage of the unique resources of the British setting, including the Oxford libraries, theaters of London and Stratford-upon-Avon, and selected cultural, historical and scientific field trip sites. The program will take place in Oriel College, founded in 1326 and considered to be one of the most beautiful of the 34 colleges that make-up Oxford University. Faculty, live and dine in the same halls as students so that formal class meetings can be supplemented by individual tutorials and informal conversations. Enrollment in all courses is deliberately kept low in order to permit maximum interaction between students and faculty.

Both, Biogeography and Biology Courses (plus various English courses) will be offered in the summer of 2004.

Lesley Rigg (Dept. of Geography, NIU) will offer several courses including; Geography of World Plant Communities and Forest Ecology and Management. Gabe Holbrook (Biological Sciences, NIU) will be offer Biology of Land Plants and Plant Physiology. We will work with any potential student to establish transfer credit at your home institution. For more information please contact Lesley Rigg at rigg@geog.niu.edu

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Field Notes

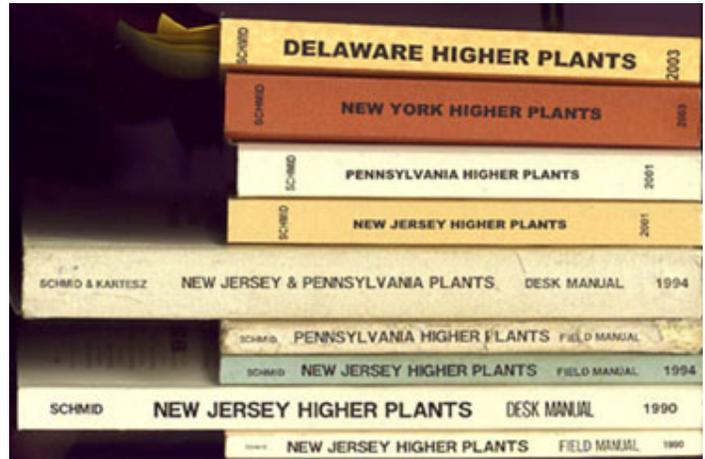
John Schmid, Consulting Ecologist and Author.

For the past 30 years I have been a consulting ecologist based in Media PA (suburban Philadelphia, Delaware County). I spend much time and energy delineating wetlands, preparing permit paperwork, and occasionally designing, implementing, and monitoring mitigation.

Wetlands tend to be a focus for controversy, so I fret about meticulous methodology and accurate

analysis and documentation. That led me to start producing my plants books in the mid 1980s, when USFWS was changing things all the time, and it was hard to get reliable information. I have kept up with this ever since, and at the moment I am trying to finish Maryland.

I put these books together for use by staff at Schmid & Company (see www.schmidco.com). But they have wider application. Obviously they provide information consultants should be using daily---that's how we have used them here for years. They should also be very useful for students at any level doing field analysis, whether botanical or ecological, involving plants.



The books are not for identification, but they do give a full list of species of trees, shrubs, and herbs known to inhabit the state, with plant family for each entry along with clues as to their growth habit, abundance, habitat, and nativity. The National Wetland Inventory never tried to list all plants, just wetland plants, so their lists need lots of supplementation for utility as practical field checklists, and USFWS has relatively little interest in state classifications of rarity and protection. USFWS started adding subregional wetland indicator status in the mid 1990s, but has been doing essentially nothing to complete that effort since then. So I have few subregional indicators to report. Finally, the books provide the rarity and protective status, state and federal, for each entry.

Organization is alphabetical by English name and separately by Latin name, with both English and Latin for each entry in both lists. There is a big synonymy from John Kartesz to provide the current Latin name if that is not what a field guide or key yields, alphabetized by obsolete name with author. Biogeographers may be interested in my

observations on patterns in the introduction to each volume.

Fire and Ice

Summer 2003. During the summer 2003 field season, David Butler, George Malanson, and Steve Walsh, along with several students including doctoral students Lynn Resler, Dawna Cerney, and Dan Weiss, conducted research on the effects of environmental change on the alpine treeline ecotone in Glacier National Park, Montana, and Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta. This work is funded by the Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey, in cooperation with Dr. Dan Fagre of the Glacier Field Station (Dan is also Chair of the AAG's Mountain Geography Specialty Group). During the field season a great deal of smoke and ash were in the air from widespread forest fires that burned on the western side of Glacier Park, eventually burning over 10% of the Park's 1 million acres (see photograph). Our work on the eastern side of the park was not directly affected except through the issue of air quality, although access into some field areas was temporarily closed because of high fire danger.



Photograph - Glacier, before it made a run over the peak and threatened West Glacier, causing temporary evacuations of park headquarters there.

Aims and Methods of Vegetation Ecology now available from The Blackburn Press

First published in 1974, "Aims and Methods of Vegetation Ecology" by Dieter Mueller-Dombois and Heinz Ellenberg rapidly became the standard text for the study of vegetation sampling design in over 60 U.S. colleges and universities. To this day, there has been no comparable text published.

The Blackburn Press has just reprinted the book, making it available again for research, reference and teaching.

"No other text has covered the subject of vegetation sampling design in such depth, breadth, and impartiality as this book, "Aims and Methods of Vegetation Ecology." Most of this material remains as current and topical today as it was a quarter-of-a-century ago, because the progress that has been made in vegetation science is in the computer-based treatment of sample data, not in the creation of new sampling protocols."-- Michael G. Barbour, plant ecologist, University of California at Davis.

For more information, see: <http://www.blackburnpress.com/aimandmetofv.html>

Editor's note: The Blackburn Press has a number of publications that should be of interest to biogeographers. Take a look at their web site: <http://www.blackburnpress.com/>

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Internet Resources

World Wildlife Fund Terrestrial Ecoregions of the World

<http://www.worldwildlife.org/ecoregions/index.htm>

National Geographic's Wild World

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/wildworld/>

WWF's Ecoregions web site provides either detailed environmental and ecological information for 867 terrestrial ecoregions (see Olson, D.M., et al. 2001. Terrestrial ecoregions of the world: A new map of life on Earth. *BioScience* 51(11):933-938). You'll need to know the name of the ecoregion you want to look up. You can get that by downloading the digital ecoregion database in ArcView Shapefile format (also included on ESRI's recent "Maps and Data" disks that ship with Arc products). Easier still, the National Geographic Wild World site provides map-based access to brief profiles of each WWF ecoregion and a link to the more complete full description at the WWF site.

The following links and descriptions (with some editing) are taken or adapted from The NSDL Scout Report, Copyright Internet Scout Project 1994-2003. <http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/>

Northern California Data

http://www.epa.gov/nerlesd1/land-sci/northern_california/

The US Environmental Protection Agency presents this comprehensive dataset (detailed maps and information on hydrography, land cover, roads, vegetation, soils, land ownership, etc) for northern California as part of a pilot study for its Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (EMAP).

Lemurs of Madagascar

<http://www.tsidy.com/lemurs/index.asp>

This Web site complements a CD-ROM on the lemurs of Madagascar produced by the Expert Center for Taxonomic Investigation, a UNESCO-sponsored NGO working to "improve the general access to and promote the broad use of taxonomic and biodiversity knowledge worldwide" through computer-aided information systems. Substantial information on Malagasy lemurs, including an overview of 63 lemur species and subspecies, citation information for thousands of related references, images, and more.

Plant Diversity in Paraguay

<http://internet.nhm.ac.uk/cgi-bin/botany/paraguay/>

Database (searchable by taxonomy or geography) of Paraguayan plant specimens from the Natural History Museum herbarium in London, as well as all records of collections made during a biological inventory of the Mbaracayú Forest Nature Reserve, information on the vegetation of Paraguay, and more.

University of Washington Libraries Digital Collections: Salmon Collection

<http://content.lib.washington.edu/salmonweb/index.html>

The University of Washington presents the Salmon Collection, an online digital collection of "documents, photographs, and other original material describing the roots of the salmon crisis in the Pacific Northwest in the late 19th and early 20th centuries."

University of Colorado Museum: Botany Section

http://cumuseum.colorado.edu/Research/Botany/botany_databases.html

A number of Web-accessible botanical resources from Herbarium COLO, the Botany Section of the University of Colorado Museum.

The University of Arkansas Library Guide to Mostly On-Line and Mostly Free US Geospatial and Attribute Data

<http://libinfo.uark.edu/GIS/us.asp>

Main page contains a list of every state and related links to available geospatial and attribute data. Additional national aggregations of data are provided near the end of the page.

USGS Geographic Data Download

<http://edc.usgs.gov/geodata/>

Large selection of downloadable digital elevation models (DEM) in various formats.

ARMI National Atlas for Amphibian Distributions

<http://www.mp2-pwrc.usgs.gov/armiatlas/index.cfm>

The Amphibian Research and Monitoring Initiative National Atlas for Amphibian Distributions (ARMI Atlas) is "a compilation of current and historic records of amphibian occurrences" developed by the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. Allows users to quickly determine when and where amphibians were last documented in a given area -- distribution gaps may suggest potential areas of study.

Atlas of Russia's Intact Forest Landscapes

<http://www.forest.ru/eng/publications/intact/index.html>

A Web portal focused on Russian forests and forestry practices and supported by a network of Russian environmental NGOs. The Atlas has two map sections, one showing the location of Russia's intact forest tracts and another showing tree species composition.

Botanique: Portal to Garden, Arboreta, and Nature Sites

<http://www.botanique.com/>

Portal to over 2300 garden, arboreta, and natural areas in Canada and the U.S. A number of easy-to-use search options (including an interactive map) allow users to find the gardens, etc. in any area

National Wetlands Inventory

<http://www.nwi.fws.gov/>

Wetlands Interactive Mapper allows visitors to display national coverage of spatial themes, including wetlands data, high resolution hydrology and transportation, and US Fish and Wildlife refuges.

Migratory Bird Center: Coffee

<http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Coffee/default.cfm>

An engaging look at how "shade-grown coffee plantations play a key role in the conservation of migratory birds that have found a sanctuary in their forest-like environment."

Two about Research on Genetic Response to Global Warming

Researchers Find Genetic Response to Global Warming: Changing Climate Prompts Genetic Change in Squirrels

<http://www.ualberta.ca/~publicas/folio/40/12/front.html>

Genetic and Plastic Responses of a Northern Mammal to Climate Change

http://www.pubs.royalsoc.ac.uk/proc_bio/abstracts/reale.html

State of the World's Forests 2003

<http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/005/Y7581E/Y7581E00.HTM>

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's biannual report on the status of the world's forests.

NASA Earth Observatory: Global Garden Gets Greener

<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Study/GlobalGarden/>

NASA's Earth Observatory is a "freely-accessible publication on the Internet where the public can obtain new satellite imagery and scientific information about our home planet." The Earth Observatory feature presented in this Web site introduces documented changes in plant productivity over the last two decades -- the warmest decades on record. The study, based on satellite imagery and ground observations, also demonstrates the most important of those factors influencing changes in plant productivity.

VN Illustrated Database of Mexican Biodiversity

<http://www.vivanatura.org/>

Viva Natura (VN), a conservation organization based in Puerto Vallarta, "is an initiative focused on understanding and conservation of nature." Its

pilot project is this Web site, which presents the biodiversity of Mexico. The site includes (among other things) an excellent photo collection featuring Mexico's plants, animals, and different habitat types.

GEO Data Portal

<http://geodata.grid.unep.ch/>

Data sets used by the United Nations Environment Network and its partners; over 400 different variables searchable by keyword or browsable by region or thematic categories.

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Editor's Note

You'll notice that the fall issue of the BSG Newsletter would be more accurately called the winter issue, launching as it is on the winter solstice. As is usually the case, I wait until after AAG registration is complete to launch the fall issue. This year, AAG's deadline moved further into the fall than ever before, and your editor got caught trying to put together the newsletter in the midst of a particularly hectic semester. I trust you've managed to live without the newsletter without too much hardship, and that you'll forgive the somewhat slapdash nature of what you've just read. In the future, I think it will be best to just stick to the original schedule.

The late arrival of this edition means that the spring edition, which is scheduled to precede the annual AAG meeting, will follow close on the heels of this one. Please send anything you'd like included in the newsletter directly to me and I'll find it a home. In particular, the spring edition will have the Recent Publications section, so send references. (PLEASE don't send material to the BSG list!)

As always, thanks to everybody who contributed material to this edition of *The Biogeographer* (special thanks to Ken Young for serving as BSG photographer in New Orleans!)

Happy Holidays!

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