

# THE BIOGEOGRAPHER

Newsletter of the Biogeography Specialty Group  
of the Association of American Geographers

Volume 13, No. 2: Fall 2013

[www.biogeographer.org](http://www.biogeographer.org)

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[Back Issues](#)

[BSG Home](#)

[AAG Home](#)

## In this issue:

- [President's Column](#)
- [Recent Publications](#)
- [Grad Representative's Column](#)
- [News and Notes](#)
- [Awards and Competitions](#)
- [Submission Information](#)

## President's Column

-- Lynn Resler, BSG President, 2013-15

### Celebrating Biogeographic Field Experiences



I hope all of you have had a great semester!

These days, field experiences are on my mind. It seemed like only yesterday that I returned from summer fieldwork in Alberta, and now I excitedly begin organizing a summer field experience for undergraduate students to Mount Baker. Thus, I have been actively contemplating the significance of the “field experience” to biogeographers engaged in both research and teaching. For many biogeographers, fieldwork plays a central role in our jobs. Fieldwork and field experiences enrich our research and teaching endeavors by enabling formal and informal observations of our natural environment, collection of in-situ data for ground-truthing, collection of samples for subsequent lab analyses, and sometimes even enabling serendipitous discoveries

that enhance our science or our personal lives.

Fieldwork has a way of bringing people together under the shared circumstances of place. It allows relationships to develop with people and landscapes that may never otherwise through navigation of its many challenges. On-site improvising of carefully pre-planned field protocols, executing emergency plans, keeping everyone happy, safe and motivated, and getting

to and from field collection sites, are among these challenges. Fieldwork has a way of making food we would never eat at home taste like the best meal we have even eaten. It helps us to find hilarity in things that would be considered childish within the confines of our Ivory Towers. Importantly, to me, it enables students to see another side of their professors. We ARE real people, after all! Importantly, and perhaps because of these characteristics, field experiences help to attract quality people to our discipline. The fun, but also the hard work of fieldwork, “is one of our most important legacies” (Butler and Wilkerson, 2000).

The centrality of the field experience is more apparent in some subdisciplines of geography than in others. I applaud, for example, the efforts of our colleagues in geomorphology who are adamant celebrators of their own field tradition. The 43rd Annual Binghamton Geomorphology Symposium, organized in 2012 by Legleiter and Marston in Jackson Hole, WY was entitled, “The Field Tradition in Geomorphology” and resulted in a special issue of Geomorphology with multiple articles on the theme. The Mel Marcus fund for fieldwork in Physical Geography is offered every year through the AAG (not just the GSG), and was formed in memory of a prominent geomorphologist. These, among other examples, are testament to the long admired and celebrated field tradition in geomorphology. Though biogeographers, like geomorphologists, address questions of environmental change and sustainability that are often best understood through primary ways of knowing (Legleiter and Marston, 2013), and though the field of biogeography is grounded in just as much of a field tradition, we have nothing analogous, to my knowledge, initiated by biogeographers. One notable exception is “Enrichment and Frustration in Fieldwork” (Parker, 2001).

In honor of celebrating the field tradition in biogeography, I would like to propose an idea that came to me in the field last summer in the Willmore Wilderness of Alberta. In the Willmore I had several ‘memorable’ meals, (including sausage grease popcorn and hummus tortillas with cheese and beef jerky). What better way to share experience than through food? Thus, I propose a BSG Field Cookbook. The purpose of the BSG Field Cookbook will be to generate interest in the BSG, to serve as a discussion piece, and if successful, to generate funds to support the BSG in some way—perhaps a one-time scholarship specifically to support a student field experience. I would like to solicit field recipes from all biogeographers! The contributions can be serious or silly, or anything in-between, and should include the following: Name of contributor, current institution and position, recipe name, anything you would like to share with us about the dish (i.e. most memorable place or occasion it was cooked, significance of dish, etc.), Ingredients and preparation. Photos are also welcome.

Submissions can be sent directly to me ([resler@vt.edu](mailto:resler@vt.edu)) or you can submit your recipe online via this form (please let me know if form isn’t working): <https://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1382378920444>. I would like to have as many recipes as possible by the AAG meeting in Tampa so I can give an update, or ideally have some available to purchase! Please take some time to submit one (or several) memorable field recipe(s)!

Finally, the BSG is sponsoring many sessions at the upcoming AAG meeting in Tampa Florida. Thanks to everyone who is organizing a session. I look forward to seeing you in Tampa!

Lynn Resler

Butler, David R., and Wilkerson, Forrest D., 2000. In praise of off-season field trips. *Journal of Geography* 99 (1), 36-42.

Legleiter, Carl J., and Marston, Richard, A., 2013. Introduction to the special issue: The field tradition in geomorphology. *Geomorphology* 200 (1), 1-8.

Parker, Kathleen C., 2001. Enrichment and frustration in the field. *The Geographical Review* 91 (1-2), 168-174.

[Back to the top](#)

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# Graduate Student Representative Column

-- Jeremy Johnson, BSG Graduate Student Representative 2013-14



**H**owdy biogeographers!

I hope that each of you had a productive summer. I am the new Biogeography Specialty Group student representative for 2013-2014. I would like to thank Melanie Stine for her service to the Biogeography Specialty Group over the last year.

For those who don't know me, I am a Ph.D. candidate at Texas A&M University in College Station, TX in the department of geography. My research focuses on integrating genetic and genomic techniques into questions of spatial and temporal variation in genome diversity that is affected by geographic features. Specifically, I explore the importance of seed dispersal at the alpine treeline ecotone using molecular and population genetic techniques in tandem with geographic methods and analysis to better understand vegetation dynamics.

For the 2014 AAG Annual Meeting in Tampa, FL, I am organizing a BSG sponsored panel session on interdisciplinary research in biogeography and its associated practicalities and pitfalls. I have assembled a wonderful group of biogeographers at various stages in their careers and with a wide range of interdisciplinary experiences to participate and share their combined knowledge on the subject. I hope you will all be able to make it. Please spread the word among undergraduate and graduate students and any faculty who are interested in interdisciplinary research.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for me or the BSG please don't hesitate, you can contact me at [jsjohnson@tamu.edu](mailto:jsjohnson@tamu.edu). If you contact me, please put "BSG student" in the subject line and I'll make sure to address your email promptly. Note, that the BSG student listserv is no longer active and, if you haven't yet, please join the BSG on Facebook for updates on BSG news.

Have a wonderful and productive winter, and I'll see you all in Tampa!

[Back to the top](#)

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## Awards and Competitions

-- Justin Hart, BSG Board Member and Awards Organizer



**H**enry Cowles Award for Excellence in Publication in Biogeography

James J. Parsons Award for Distinguished Career in Biogeography

The Cowles Award was established in 1998 to honor Henry Cowles, who published the first paper to appear in the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*: "The causes of vegetation cycles" (1911). The award recognizes the best biogeographical paper or book of the year.

The Parsons Award, named in honor of long-time University of California-Berkeley professor James J. Parsons, was created in 1998 to recognize outstanding lifetime achievements in the field of biogeography.

Criteria used to assess a candidate's merit for this award include a distinguished research career, remarkable dedication to the development of undergraduate and graduate students in biogeography, and outstanding service to the discipline.

Applications for the Cowles Award should include the name of the person(s) you are nominating along with the citation for the paper or book that was published in 2013. Application packets for the Parsons Award should include 1) a formal nomination letter and 2) at least two supporting letters. Parsons Award nominations should be submitted as a single packet.

Applications can be submitted via postal or electronic mail to:

Justin Hart  
Department of Geography  
University of Alabama  
Box 870322  
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35406, USA  
Email: hart013(at)bama.ua.edu  
Phone: 205-348-1673

The nomination deadline for both awards is 1 February 2014. Please consider nominating deserving colleagues for these awards. For a list of previous award winners, please see the BSG Website (<http://people.cas.sc.edu/kupfer/bsg.html>).

[Back to the top](#)

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## Student Paper Competition

-- Evan Larson, BSG Board Member and Student Presentation Awards Coordinator



I am happy to announce the 2014 Biogeography Specialty Group Student Paper Competition to be held at the Annual AAG Meeting in Tampa. This is a wonderful opportunity for new researchers to disseminate their work and for the BSG to recognize the next generation of biogeographers. If you are a graduate or undergraduate student planning to present your research at the upcoming meeting, please consider entering the BSG Paper Competition. If you are an advisor who has students who might not be aware of this competition, please encourage your best and brightest students to participate. There are two award categories this year:

- Best Undergraduate/Master's Student Paper
- Best Ph.D. Student Paper

Eligibility: Both competitions are open to students at all levels of their respective degrees, including those who received their Ph.D. within the past year, who are giving an oral presentation at the meeting. Students nearing the completion of their degrees are strongly encouraged to use this competition as a forum to broadcast their most interesting and important findings. To be eligible, the student must be the sole or primary author of the paper and be the presenter at the meeting. Illustrated posters are not eligible for this competition.

To enter the competition: If you would like to enter the 2014 BSG Student Paper Competition please contact Dr. Evan Larson at [larsonev@uwplatt.edu](mailto:larsonev@uwplatt.edu) with the following information:

1. A copy of the abstract submission form from the AAG
2. Your PIN for the 2014 AAG meeting
3. A completed application form available upon request from Evan or from the Biogeography Specialty Group web page under the Student Paper Competition link: <http://www.biogeographer.org/>

The deadline for submission is February 15, 2014.

Judges Needed! Serving as a judge for this competition is an excellent way to familiarize yourself and offer helpful feedback to new members of the biogeography community. If you are interested in serving as a judge for either competition, please contact Evan Larson at [larsonev@uwplatt.edu](mailto:larsonev@uwplatt.edu).

[Back to the top](#)

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## Student Research Grant Competition

--Grant Elliott, BSG Board Member & Student Research Grant Coordinator



The goal 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, adequacy and quality of the methods, and originality of the research;
- 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 both the AAG and BSG, and the proposed project should be part of her/his thesis or dissertation research. Students may join the AAG and BSG now and become eligible for the grants competition if not already a student member.

Normally, awards are made to one master's student for \$500 and one doctoral student for \$1000 each year, but an additional award may be made if the proposals are exceptional and funds are available. A committee of four to six biogeographers from different institutions will evaluate the proposals. Applications must be emailed by the end of the day on February 14 to Dr. Grant Elliott. Unlike recent years, however, formal announcement of the award winners will be made at the BSG Business Meeting in Tampa this April.

For more information please contact:

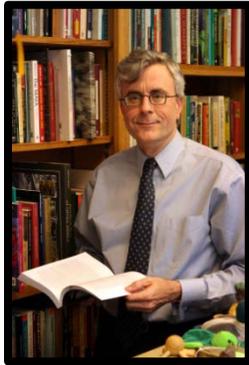
Dr. Grant Elliott  
Assistant Professor of Geography  
Department of Geography  
University of Missouri  
Columbia, MO 65211  
[elliottg@missouri.edu](mailto:elliottg@missouri.edu)

[Back to the top](#)

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## 2013 BSG Board Elections

-- Curt Holder, BSG Board Member and Elections Organizer



### *Call for Nominations: 2014 BSG Board Elections*

The Biogeography Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers invites nominations for board members. During this election cycle, we will elect two new BSG Board members to take the place of board members Curt Holder and Evan Larson. Additionally, the student representative position on the board, currently held by Jeremy Johnson, is also open for nominations. Service of the board members is for two years, and the student representative serves for one year. Please send nominations for any of these three positions to Curt Holder at [cholder@uccs.edu](mailto:cholder@uccs.edu) no later than **31 January 2014**. Also, please specify the position of interest for each nomination. Voting will take place between Monday, 10 February and Monday, 10 March 2014. Election results will be announced at our annual BSG specialty group board meeting in Tampa.

[Back to the top](#)

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## Recent Publications

### Articles:

Bury, J., B. G. Mark, M. Carey, K. R. Young, J. McKenzie, M. Baraer, A. French, and M. H. Polk. 2013. New geographies of water and climate change in Peru: Coupled natural and social transformations in the Santa River watershed. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 103: 363-374.

Crews, K. A. and K. R. Young. Forefronting the socio-ecological in savanna landscapes through their spatial and temporal contingencies. *Land* 2013, 2(3): 452-471; doi:10.3390/land2030452

Feddema, J, Mast, J.N., and Savage, M. 2013. Modeling high-severity fire, drought and climate change impacts on ponderosa pine regeneration. *Ecological Modelling* 253:56-69.

Kim, D., and J. D. Phillips. 2013. Predicting the structure and mode of vegetation dynamics: An application of graph theory to state-and-transition models. *Ecological Modelling* 265:64-73.

Larson, E. R., S. Allen, N. L. Flinner, S. G. Labarge & T. C. Wilding (2013) The need and means to update chronologies in a dynamic environment. *Tree-Ring Research*, 69, 21–27.

León, B., C. J. Rothfels, M. Arakaki, K. R. Young, and K. M. Pryer. 2013. Revealing a cryptic fern distribution through DNA sequencing: *Pityrogramma trifoliata* in the western Andes of Peru. *American Fern Journal* 103: 40-48.

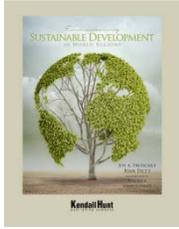
Montoya, M. and K. R. Young. 2013. Sustainability of natural resource use for an Amazonian indigenous group. *Regional Environmental Change*. 10.1007/s10113-013-0439-1

Savage, M., Mast, J.N., and Feddema, J. 2013. Double Whammy: High-Severity Fire and Drought in Ponderosa Pine Forests of the Southwest. *Canadian Journal of Forest Research* 43(6):570-583.

ter Steege, H. et al. (120 authors). 2013. Hyperdominance in the Amazonian tree flora. *Science* 342, DOI: 10.1126/science.1243092

Young, K. R. 2013. Change in tropical landscapes: Implications for health and livelihoods. Pp. 55-72 in B. H. King & K. A. Crews (eds.). *Ecologies and Politics of Health*. Routledge, New York.

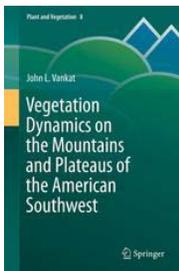
## Books:



Fritschle, J.A. and Dicce, R. 2013. *Envisioning Sustainable Development in World Regions*. 1<sup>st</sup> edition. Kendall Hunt.

**Summary:** In world of seven billion people, we must confront a daunting challenge. How can seven billion of us inhabit the planet in a way that provides the best life for as many of us as possible? In other words, how can we sustain our personal, social, cultural, economic, and environmental well-being long into the future? This question is very real and being addressed by people, governments, corporations, and non-governmental organizations around the world. Indeed, we have achieved an unprecedented level of global cooperation today, and we are using our connectivity and interdependence to foster a global-scale project. This global project, and the key to how we can thrive with so many of us on the planet, are one and the same: Sustainable Development. What is especially exciting is that this effort is happening all over the planet right now.

This book addresses sustainable development in the twenty-first century in a way that is accessible to students in introductory geography and environmental studies, or to anyone interested in gaining a better understanding of what exactly is meant by sustainable development. The text surveys the fundamental conditions to achieving sustainable development on a global and regional scale, and reports on the progress of this global project to date. In the spirit of lessening its ecological footprint, the text is available from Kendall-Hunt exclusively as an e-book, which also allows for publication of its full-color maps and reduces its cost.



Vankat, John. 2013. *Vegetation Dynamics on the Mountains and Plateaus of the American Southwest*. Springer; 461 pp.

**Summary:** This book provides information essential for anyone interested in the ecology of the American Southwest, including land and resource managers, environmental planners, conservationists, environmentalists, ecologists, land stewards, and students. The book is unique in its coverage of the hows and whys of dynamics (changes) in the major types of vegetation occurring on southwestern mountains and plateaus. The book explains the drivers and processes of change, describes historical changes, and provides conceptual models that diagrammatically illustrate past, present, and potential future changes.

All major types of vegetation are covered: spruce-fir forest, mixed conifer forest, ponderosa pine forest, pinyon-juniper vegetation, subalpine-montane grassland, Gambel oak shrubland, and interior chaparral shrubland. The focus is on vegetation that is relatively undisturbed, i.e., in natural and near-natural condition, and how it responds to natural disturbances such as fire and drought, as well as to anthropogenic disturbances such as fire exclusion and invasive species. Although intensive land uses such as logging are not included, knowledge of post-disturbance vegetation dynamics is applicable to the restoration and recovery of heavily disturbed areas.

[Back to the top](#)

# News

## Treasurer's Report

Our meeting this year in Los Angeles included \$2388.03 in awards and expenses. Congratulations to all of our award winners! Our 3 largest awards are the Masters and PhD grants (\$500 and \$1000 respectively) and the \$500 support for the graduate student representative. We also award money for best Masters and PhD student paper presentations.

As of August 31, 2013 (the AAG has a short delay on monthly memberships), our balance was \$1484.57, after a minimum balance for the year of 1154.57. This money is surplus money from past years when we spent less than our income from membership. As a result, that balance rolls over to the next fiscal year. In recent years, our payouts have hovered around our intake, sometimes falling a bit below.

I am honored to continue serving as your Biogeography Specialty Group Secretary-Treasurer, and I am always happy to answer any questions you may have. My email is [drezner "at" yorku.ca](mailto:drezner@at.yorku.ca). I hope to see everyone in Tampa next year and do come by and say hello.

Taly Drezner  
Biogeography Specialty Group Secretary-Treasurer

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## Research Notes

The Tree-Ring, Earth, and Environmental Sciences Laboratory (TREES Lab) at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville is moving into its second year of official operation. The lab, building from its foundation as a NSF



TREES Lab researchers coring a large eastern hemlock along the Presque Isle Trail of the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park

REU site, is explicitly founded on integrating undergraduate students in hands-on, transformative research experiences, with particular emphasis given to engaging students from groups historically underrepresented in higher education and science. Over the 2012–2013 year, sixteen TREES Lab students presented their research at meetings across the United States, including the annual meetings of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans

in Science, the Wisconsin Alliance for Minority Participation, the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, the American Geophysical Union, and the Geological Society of America. The year culminated with 11 presentations associated with the TREES Lab presented at the 2013 AmeriDendro conference in Tucson, Arizona. Not too bad for an undergraduate research laboratory.

Some of the current research projects taking place in the TREES Lab includes updating tree-ring chronologies across Wisconsin and Michigan, including the extremely high-quality Presque Isle River, Loon Lake, and Bass Lake eastern hemlock chronologies as well as the Devil's Lake white pine chronology and others in the region, developing a network of oak tree-ring chronologies from living oaks and historic structures throughout the Driftless Area of Southwest

in Science, the Wisconsin Alliance for Minority Participation, the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, the American Geophysical Union, and the Geological Society of America. The year



TREES Lab researchers coring an ancient bur oak in southwestern Wisconsin

Wisconsin to reconstruct patterns of drought over recent centuries, and investigating the effects of invasive earthworms on tree growth and productivity on the Menominee Forest and elsewhere in the Great Lakes Region. Lab personnel are also deeply involved with the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey to develop a depth-to-bedrock map for southwest Wisconsin as well as a range of other geomorphic research projects.



TREES Lab researchers coring an old eastern hemlock near Bass Lake on the Menominee Forest

Finally, another exciting recent development is the result of a collaboration between Dr. Henri Grissino-Mayer from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Evan Larson, assistant professor of geography at UW-Platteville, and Dr. Kun Tian, assistant professor of software engineering at UW-Platteville. While visiting to give a guest lecture in the Fall of 2012, Evan, Henri, and Kun met to discuss the potential for Kun's software re-engineering course to create an updated version of the data entry module of the fire history software FHX2. Over the spring 2013 semester, the students enrolled in the course

formed four groups which each developed a different version of the module while Evan acted as a "client" for the work, watching presentations and providing feedback to the students. The final product is a free, functional, stand-alone Java-based application that creates FHX2-formatted data sets that can be directly imported to the graphing and statistical analysis modules of FHAES. The FHAES team is currently working to integrate the software with their program to enhance the functionality of the FHAES software. This project will be presented at the AAG meeting in Tampa this spring!

[Back to the top](#)

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## Field Notes

John Maingi and Kim Medley in the Department of Geography at Miami University, Ohio invite biogeographers to visit the website ([kasigaumu.wordpress.com](http://kasigaumu.wordpress.com)) for their field research project "Short Term Dynamics in Changing Environments: A Geospatial Analysis of Seasonal Forest Response and Extractive Resource Entitlements at Mt. Kasigau, Kenya directed by John K. Maingi and Kim Medley in the Department of Geography at Miami University, Ohio. The site provides background to the study area at Mt. Kasigau, a synthesis of our ongoing research and its findings, a description of the key participants, and a listing of project outcomes and available resources. The project (2011-2014) received funding from the National Science Foundation (GSS 1061407), and is being conducted in collaboration with students and colleagues at Miami University and in Kenya. We welcome your comments ([medleyke@miamioh.edu](mailto:medleyke@miamioh.edu)).

[Back to the top](#)

# Submission Guidelines & Notes

--- John Waldron, Editor, *The Biogeographer*



Submissions to *The Biogeographer* should be sent directly to the editor as email attachments in Word format to [jwaldron@umf.edu](mailto:jwaldron@umf.edu). Bear in mind that your editor generally just cuts and pastes whatever he gets, so please spell-check and proofread your submissions carefully. Submissions should be concise and written in a style consistent with the rest of the newsletter.

**Notes and News Items.** News items can be personal, departmental, institutional, or simply biogeography-related stories from the press. Notes are intended to convey topical information of interest to the BSG community.

**Recent Publications.** Only publications that have actually appeared in print or online will be listed, so please do not submit in-press items until you have page numbers or a permanent URL.

Topics for these categories include:

- Research Notes: new projects and progress reports or general research-related ideas and issues.
- Field Notes: recent field work or field trips or retellings of classic tales from the field (embellishments welcome).
- Course Notes: news, announcements, or articles related to teaching biogeography or pedagogical issues affecting the discipline.
- Book Notes: book reviews or announcements.
- Miscellaneous Notes: anything that doesn't fit in any of the other categories.

Back issues of *The Biogeographer* in pdf format are posted on the BSG website ([www.biogeographer.org](http://www.biogeographer.org)).

Please consider adding the **BSG domain** to your favorite links and promote it on your homepage, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. ([www.biogeographer.org](http://www.biogeographer.org))

The BSG Facebook page is managed by Arvind Bhuta and is available here:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/141655989204924/>

John Kupfer is presently managing the BSG website, [www.biogeographer.org](http://www.biogeographer.org). If you have links (or other materials – such as syllabi for biogeography courses), send up to 2-3 pages to John at [kupfer@sc.edu](mailto:kupfer@sc.edu)

Communications among BSG members is usually by email through the AAG's discussion forum. Current instructions to access and post messages on the BSG forum: Login to the AAG website ([www.aag.org](http://www.aag.org))

Select Memberships  
Select Specialty Groups  
Scroll down to Biogeography and click on “learn more”

[Back to the top](#)