

THE BIOGEOGRAPHER

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

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Notes from the Chair

Tony Stallins, BSG Chair, 2017–19

Like many of you, I find that competing in the marketplace of ideas can be unpredictable. Themes and methodologies rise and fall in popularity. The process of peer review also has an element of unpredictability despite its proven worth. The quality of our work has its own element of unpredictability too, as it is often difficult for us to judge its value at the outset. More than just a few geographers have seized upon an idea or method and worked toward what we thought would surely be an immediately recognizable breakthrough for the discipline. Unfortunately, these impassioned works of ours are most likely coherent and revolutionary only to ourselves. But that is not to say there is no value in such idiosyncratic work. Indeed, it may not be productive from the standpoint of publication counts and lines on a vita. But the incomprehensibility and failure common to free form intellectualizing is part of the collective process of moving knowledge forward.

I am amazed at the knowledge we possess and wield on any average day in any average lecture. On the other hand, I think we could make more institutional room for what we might call hunch-based science or science with fewer rules. There would be more failures, but the net we cast out would be bigger. The science of today will be invigorated by the science of tomorrow and few of us can see those changes coming until they are here. That's what we need to keep in mind when the certainty required of being a professional academic overshadows any humble appreciation of how much we don't know. Here are a few recent articles that illustrate how the small and conjectural can be valued amid the seemingly permanent towers of academic practice and accomplishment.

(1) Vazire, S. 2017. Our obsession with eminence warps research. *Nature* 547(7661).

doi:10.1038/547007a

(2) Fortin, J. and D.J. Currie. 2013. Big science vs. little science: how scientific impact scales with funding. *PloS One* 8(6): e65263.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0065263>

Most of our research proposals undergo single-blind review, in which reviewers are aware of the author's identity. In a double-blind review, the reviewer does not have this information. Single-blind reviewers are significantly more likely than their double-blind counterparts to recommend for acceptance works from famous authors and top universities. Double-blind reviewing, on the other hand, gets around this problem of prestige. Eminence, the very thing that we are required to cultivate as academics, shapes the processes of inquiry by favoring the well-established rather than the novel and lesser known.

(1) Fang, F. and A. Casadevall. 2016. Research funding: the case for a modified lottery. *MBio* 7(2): e00422-16. doi: 10.1128/mBio.00422-16

doi: 10.1128/mBio.00422-16

(2) Gravem, S. A., S.M. Bachhuber, H.K. Fulton-Bennett, Z.H. Randell, A.J. Rickborn, J.M. Sullivan, and B.A. Menge. 2017. Transformative research is not easily predicted. *Trends in Ecology and Evolution* 32(11) 825–834.

It is actually quite challenging to predict transformative research. Transformativity often arises as an after effect of more incremental research and cannot be easily predicted ahead of time. Larger grants do not necessarily lead to larger discoveries, as scientific impact measured in publications is only weakly limited by funding. Lotteries could make research funding awards more equitable given that ranking large numbers of meritorious proposals induces selection bias.

(1) Mountz, A., A. Bonds, B. Mansfield, J. Loyd, J. Hyndman, M. Walton-Roberts, R. Basu, R. Whitson, R. Hawkins, T. Hamilton, and W. Curran. 2015. For slow scholarship: a feminist politics of resistance through collective action in the neoliberal university. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 14(4) 1235–1259.

The degree to which our public academic personas emphasize certainty and closure over working the more productive gray areas is a consequence of the professionalization of the academic class. Rather than researchers ensconced in the thick and tangled woods of ideas, we are expected to signal and advertise certainty and clarity by producing large numbers of publications. We are also expected to embrace the cultivation of a university administrative utopia that reinforces this ideal. Good scholarship, on the other hand, requires more open-

ended use of our time. Time to think, reflect, and even fail may not be always be possible, but we need to hold on to that ideal and cultivate it how we can.

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Graduate Student Representative Column

Nathan Gill, BSG Graduate Student Representative
2017–18

Fellow members of the BSG,

I hope you all are doing well now that we are in the thick of the academic year. Plans for the AAG meeting in New Orleans are coming together, and we are again expecting to have a tremendous amount of excellent research presented by members of the Biogeography Specialty Group. Thank you all for your hard work.

I have organized a special panel session for the meeting entitled “Preparing competitive research grants in biogeography.” The panel is open to all, but will be especially geared toward early-career and student biogeographers. We aim to discuss where and how to successfully seek funding for your biogeography research, from various NSF programs to smaller, lesser known grants. Our panel is comprised of six BSG members who come from a variety of career stages and areas of expertise: Maegan Rochner, University of Tennessee; Susy Ziegler, Northern Michigan; Mike Binford, NSF Macrosystems Biology/University of Florida; Julie Commerford, Saginaw Valley State University; Libby Wentz, Arizona State University; and Evan Larson, University of Wisconsin-Platteville. Please plan to attend to hear what our experienced panelists have to share about finding success in pursuing external funding, and bring your own knowledge and experiences into the discussion. I look forward to seeing you all there!

Nathan Gill
ngill@clarku.edu

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BSG Board Elections

Brenden McNeil, BSG Board Member 2016–18 and Elections Organizer

[Call for Nominations: 2018 BSG Board Elections](#)

The Biogeography Specialty Group of the American Association of Geographers invites nominations for board members. During this election cycle, we will elect two new BSG board members to take the place of Brenden McNeil and Maria Caffrey.

Additionally, the student representative position on the board is also open for nominations. Service as board members is for two years, and the student representative serves for one year. Please send nominations for any of these three positions to Brenden.McNeil@mail.wvu.edu no later than 15 February 2018. Also, please specify the position of interest for each nomination.

Voting will take place between 19 February and 19 March 2018. Election results will be announced at our annual BSG specialty group board meeting in New Orleans during the AAG Annual Meeting.

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Awards and Competitions



James J. Parsons Award for Distinguished Career in Biogeography & Henry Cowles Award for Excellence in Publication in Biogeography

Grant Harley, BSG Board Member 2017–19 and Awards Organizer

The James J. 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. 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.

The Henry 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. Nominations 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 2017.

Previous award winners are listed on the BSG homepage.

Cowles nominations and Parsons applications may be submitted via electronic mail to: gcharley@uidaho.edu



Student Presentation Awards

Maria Caffrey, BSG Board Member 2016–18 and Student Presentation Awards Coordinator

We are now taking applications for the 2018 student presentation competition to be held at the AAG annual meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana. The annual meeting is an opportunity to showcase your research and discuss your findings with other experts in your field. By taking part in the student presentation competition you not only get to add this accomplishment to your CV, but also get valuable input from fellow biogeographers on your work.

The student presentation competition consists of two awards:

- Best undergraduate or master's student presentation, and
- Best Ph.D. student presentation.

This competition is open to all undergraduate and graduate students.

You must be the primary author and presenter of the paper or poster. Individuals who received their degree one year prior are also eligible. If you would like to participate in the competition, please email a copy of your abstract and the completed application form (found on the following page and also available at www.biogeographer.org) to maria.caffrey@colorado.edu. **The deadline for submissions is Monday, 26 February.**

APPLICATION FORM: 2018 BSG STUDENT PAPER COMPETITION

Name:

Mailing Address:

E-mail Address:

Phone:

Title of Paper:

Department and University of student:

At the time of application, I am enrolled as [check one]:

- an undergraduate
- a masters student
- a Ph.D. student
- completed Ph.D. defense within the past year

I am [check one]:

- the sole author
- the principal author of the paper

Co-authors of the paper are:

My PIN for the AAG meeting is:

Please enter my paper in the BSG student paper award competition.



Student Research Grant Competition

Daehyun Kim, BSG Board Member 2017–19 and 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 Monday 19 February to Dr. Daehyun Kim. As before, formal announcement of the award winners will be made at the BSG Business Meeting in New Orleans this April.

For more information please contact:

Dr. Daehyun Kim
Associate Professor
Department of Geography
Seoul National University
Seoul 08826, South Korea
biogeokim@snu.ac.kr

Please see further instructions on the following page.

Graduate Student Research Grant Application Instructions

Name all application files with your last name first. Each applicant should submit a proposal according to the following format:

1. **Cover sheet**—Please complete and submit the application form on the next page. The form must be signed by the student's advisor (or provide advisor's e-mail address if application is submitted electronically) to certify that the information is correct. You should type the information directly into the cover sheet, and then simply append the following items to the end of this document.
2. **Project description**—This section should contain a clear description of the research objectives, the expected significance, and the research methodology. The text should not exceed two single-spaced pages. Cite only the most relevant publications.
3. **List of cited references.**
4. **Itemized budget and justification** (no more than one page)—Note: no salaries or indirect costs are allowed, only direct costs such as travel expenses and essential field supplies. The awards are usually \$1000 for doctoral work and \$500 for master's work.
5. **One-page abbreviated curriculum vitae**—Note: in the CV, please *briefly* list past and current funding (both the agency and the dollar amount) that has supported this proposed research. Awards given by the BSG are partially based on demonstration of *need* for BSG funding. Failure to disclose your past and current funding (including funding that may have arrived during this competition) for this research could result in disqualification.

Proposals must be submitted electronically. Please e-mail the application as a Word or PDF document to biogeokim@snu.ac.kr by 19 February 2018. Please name all files beginning with your last name (e.g., Kim_CV.docx).

Cover Sheet

Date:

Name of Applicant:

Department:

University:

Mailing Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

The proposed study is for: **Master's Degree** **Doctoral Degree**

Anticipated date of graduation:

Title of project:

Amount requested:

**I am a student member
of both the AAG and BSG:** **Yes** **No**

**Electronic Signature of
Applicant: (please type)**

Proof of student eligibility:

I certify that the applicant is currently a graduate student under my supervision and that the proposed project is part of her/his thesis research.

Name of Advisor:

Advisor's Electronic Signature: (please type)

E-mail address so that we may confirm your signature on this proposal:

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Recent Publications

Articles and Book Contributions:

1. Anzah, F. and D.R. Butler. 2017. Revisiting an early classic on gopher bioturbation and geomorphology: Joseph Grinnell (1923) The burrowing rodents of California as agents in soil formation. *Journal of Mammalogy* 4 (3): 137–149. *Progress in Physical Geography* 41(4): 513–517.
2. Anzah, F.A., D.R. Butler, and R.W. Dixon. 2017. The effects of physical landscape variables on burrow-site selection in the Kuwaiti Desert by lesser Egyptian jerboa (*Jaculus jaculus*). *Papers in Applied Geography* 3 (1): 44–51.
3. Berkowitz, B.N. and K.E. Medley. 2017. Home gardenscapes as sustainable landscape management on St. Eustatius, Dutch Caribbean. *Sustainability* 9 (8): 1310 doi:10.3390/su9081310.
4. Butler, D.R. 2017. Roderick Peattie's *Mountain Geography—A Critique and Field Study* (1936). *Progress in Physical Geography* 41 (2): 238–242.
5. Butler, D.R. 2017. Zoogeomorphology. In *Humans and Animals—A Geography of Coexistence*, eds. J. Urbanik and C.L. Johnston, 372–374. Santa Barbara, CA, ABC-CLIO.
6. Gill, N.S., D. Jarvis, T.T. Veblen, S.T.A. Pickett, and D. Kulakowski. 2017. Is initial post-disturbance regeneration indicative of longer-term trajectories? *Ecosphere* 8:e01924. 10.1002/ecs2.1924.
7. Gill, N.S., F. Sangermano, B. Buma, and D. Kulakowski. 2017. *Populus tremuloides* seedling establishment: an underexplored vector for forest type conversion after multiple disturbances. *Forest Ecology and Management* 404: 156–164.
8. Gillespie, T. W., K.S. Willis, S. Ostermann-Kelm, T. Longcore, F. Federico, L. Lee, and G. M. MacDonald. 2017. Inventorying and monitoring night light distribution and dynamics in the Mediterranean Coast Network of Southern California. *Natural Areas Journal* 37 (3): 500–510.
9. Medley, K.E., J.K. Maingi, K. Maingi, and M.A. Henkin, 2017. Embedded histories and biogeographic interpretations of forest diversity at Mt. Kasigau, Kenya. *African Geographical Review* doi: 10.1080/19376812.2017.1325757.
10. Mutiti, C.M., K.E. Medley, and S. Mutiti, 2016. Using GIS and remote sensing to explore the influence of physical environmental factors and historical land use on bushland structure. *African Journal of Ecology* doi: 10.1111/aje.12378
11. Paudel, S., J.C. Benavides, B. MacDonald, T. Longcore, G. W. T. Wilson, and S. Loss. 2017. Determinants of native and non-native plant community structure in an oceanic island. *Ecosphere* 8 (9): e01927.
12. Shrestha, S. and K. Medley. 2016. Landscape mapping: gaining "sense of place" for conservation in the Manaslu Conservation Area, Nepal. *Journal of Ethnobiology* 36 (2): 326–347.
13. Shrestha, S. and K. Medley. 2017. Integrating ecological and ethnobotanical knowledge to promote collaborative conservation planning in the Nepal Himalaya. *Mountain Research and Development* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-15-00081.1>.

14. Walsh, M.K., M.L. Lukens, P.T. McCutcheon, and G.C. Burtchard. 2017. Fire-climate-human interactions during the postglacial period at Sunrise Ridge, Mount Rainier National Park, Washington (USA). *Quaternary Science Reviews*
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.quascirev.2017.10.032>.

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News

2018 Annual Meeting of the AAG, New Orleans, Louisiana

The Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers is one of the largest geographic conferences in the world. Our next meeting, 10–14 April 2018, will be headquartered at the Marriott French Quarter. Other official 2018 AAG Meeting hotels include the Sheraton New Orleans and Astor Crowne Plaza. All official meeting hotels are located steps away from one another along Canal Street between the French Quarter and central business district. Registration is still open. Please see the AAG Annual Meeting webpage for further information and updates: <http://www.aag.org/cs/annualmeeting>.

2018 North American Dendroecological Fieldweek (NADEF)

The 2018 NADEF is returning to the A.L. Mickelson Field Station near Cody, Wyoming. This spectacular location, located near the Shoshone National Forest and Yellowstone National Park, offers an abundance of research opportunities for participants. The fieldweek will be held 21–30 July. As the fieldweek approaches, new information may be accessed at <https://sites.google.com/site/northamericandendrofieldweek>.

Sally's Foto File, Autumn Edition

We know Sally Horn not only as a preeminent global biogeographer, but also as the faithful BSG business meeting photographer. This News column, as viewed through the lens of Sally's camera, will take you on a nostalgic trip through the places and faces of the BSG.



This installment features two former University of Tennessee Geography M.S. students as they participated in Sally's Biogeography Field Methods course at the UT Arboretum, way back in spring of 2004. Chris Underwood (left) and Evan Larson are currently colleagues at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville and still enjoy kicking around in the woods and conducting research with *their* students in the Tree-Ring, Earth, and Environmental Sciences Laboratory. How about that for a full-circle biogeography story?

Notes

Miscellaneous:

1. Back issues of *The Biogeographer* are posted on the BSG website (www.biogeographer.org).
2. Please consider adding the **BSG domain** to your favorite links and promote it on your homepage, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.
3. The BSG Facebook page is managed by Arvind Bhuta and is available here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/141655989204924/>
4. Tony Stallins is presently managing the BSG website. If you have links (or other materials, such as syllabi for biogeography courses, etc.), send up to 2–3 pages to Tony. You can contact him at jast239@uky.edu
5. Communications among BSG members is usually by email through the AAG's discussion forum. For instructions to access and post messages on the BSG forum, login to the AAG website (www.aag.org), then:

Select "Memberships"
Select "Specialty Groups"
Scroll down to Biogeography and select "learn more"

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Submission Guidelines

Chris Underwood, Editor, *The Biogeographer*

Submissions to *The Biogeographer* should be sent directly to the editor (underwoodc@uwplatt.edu) as email attachments in Word format. 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

Notes are intended to convey topical information of interest to the BSG community. *Notes* topics may include: (1) **Research Notes** – new projects and progress reports or general research-related ideas and issues; (2) **Field Notes** – recent field work or field trips or retellings of classic tales from the field; (3) **Course Notes** – news, announcements, or articles related to teaching biogeography or pedagogical issues affecting the discipline; (4) **Book Notes** – book reviews or announcements; and/or (5) **Miscellaneous Notes** – anything that doesn't fit in any of the other categories.

News items can be personal, departmental, institutional, or any other biogeography-related happenings that have occurred since the last edition of *The Biogeographer*. These can be self-authored items or press releases.

Recent Publications

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

Kind regards,

Chris

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