

THE BIOGEOGRAPHER

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

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Notes from the Chair



Daehyun Kim, BSG Chair, 2019–21

There is something I always want to ask to my colleagues (but I have rarely done so): Do you feel that you increasingly know better as you get more publications? The question may sound strange, but I am asking because, to be honest, that is not always the case with me.

Coastal dunes, quite simply and by definition, are formed by the accumulation of wind-blown sands. Then, what would you do if a dunefield became too vegetated, which substantially reduces the movement and deposition of sands? Could it be still considered a true dune? Should one do something immediately to enhance the dynamism of the system? If so, what should be done

and to what extent?

I am struggling with these questions in managing the Sindu coastal dune in western Korea. In recent months, the local government bulldozed a foredune portion (ca. 1.2 ha) of this ecosystem to facilitate sand movement and, perhaps more importantly, to attract tourists who expect to see a desert-like landscape for the first time in their lives. And here is my problem: Despite having studied the geomorphology and ecology of Sindu for nearly two decades, I am not entirely sure how the devegetated zone will change in the near and distant future and whether such a radical management plan should be avoided or even encouraged as an experimental trial.

We learn from the past. By suppressing fire in the American West, humans enhanced accumulation and continuity of fuels, which would further increase the probability of large fire events in the future. After extirpation of wolves in the Yellowstone National Park, subsequent browsing pressure by increased native ungulates restricted recruitment of palatable woody species near streams and accelerated bank erosion and disconnection from historical floodplains. These are merely a couple of examples, showing how humans can purposefully alter ecosystem functions and patterns fundamentally, thereby often result in unexpected, negative outcomes in the end. There should be a lot more cases than these, including dam construction, non-native species introduction, coastal wetland reclamation, and so on. I am sure that the people who practiced fire suppression and wolf hunting believed they were doing right things based on informed decisions. I guess that they also had passion and pride for their actions.

Broadly, I wonder what proportion of all management or restoration efforts humans had made in the past proved to be ecologically and environmentally sound in the end. In the same spirit, what proportion of all management or restoration efforts humans are making today will be considered ecologically and environmentally sound by our next generations? Are we doing truly right things? Are the actions we are passionately making now really based on correct decisions? Is the new knowledge we are producing comprehensive and confidently unmistakable?

If you have positive answers to these questions, you generally advocate a knowledge-based world view (KBWV). If not, you are likely to support an ignorance-based world view (IBWV) (Vitek and Jackson; Turner 2009). Under the KBWV, you assume that humans know most of what is needed to be known. You are not concerned about what is not known, but how to apply what we know in the right way. The IBWV, in contrast, focuses on what is not known, assumes that much will remain unknown, and anticipates that the expansion of knowledge in various areas will introduce additional complexity. It is this complexity that makes me unsure about the goodness and badness of the recent devegetation at Sindu. The more I study dune ecology and geomorphology, the more I feel that what I have found is not comprehensive or deep enough to recommend a final decision or make a confident conclusion.

In most restoration or management projects, I am inclined to remain cautious. I do not believe that our knowledge is or will ever be complete. I do not want to join the group of people whose recommendations eventually led to big environmental mistakes as history has repeatedly and unendingly witnessed. Stay tuned my fellow biogeographers. I will keep researching at Sindu throughout the rest of my career and keep you updated with the success or failure of the unprecedented radical management actions made here (for more background information, see Kim et al. 2019).

Kim, D., Lee, J.-Y., Seo, J. and Song, I. 2019. Recolonization of native and invasive plants after large-scale clearance of a temperate coastal dunefield. *Applied Geography* 109: 102030. doi.org/10.1016/j.apgeog.2019.05.007.

Turner, R.E. 2009. Doubt and the values of an ignorance-based world view for restoration: coastal Louisiana wetlands. *Estuaries and Coasts* 32: 1054–1068.

Vitek, B. and Jackson, W. (eds.). 2008. *The virtues of ignorance*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press.

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Graduate Student Representative Column

None submitted

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BSG Board Elections



Nina Hewitt, BSG Board Member 2018–20 and Elections Organizer

Call for Nominations: 2020 BSG Board Elections

The Biogeography Specialty Group of the American Association of Geographers invites nominations for elected positions to the BSG leadership. During this election cycle, we will elect two new **board members** to take over from Nina Hewitt (Elections Organizer) and Christy Briles (Student Presentation Awards Coordinator). Additionally, the **graduate student representative** position is open for nominations. Service as board member is for two years, and the student representative serves for one year.

Please submit nominations for these three positions via email to nina.hewitt@ubc.ca by 21 February 2020, and please specify the position for the

nomination.

Voting will take place between 24 February and 20 March 2020. Election results will be announced at our annual Biogeography Specialty Group board meeting in Denver, Colorado 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

Stockton Maxwell, Department of Geospatial Science, Radford University, Radford, VA
BSG Board Member 2019–21 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. 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 2019. If you have a pdf of the publication, please send it along. Previous award winners are listed on the BSG homepage.

Please submit Cowles nominations and Parsons applications via email to: Stockton Maxwell at rmaxwell2@radford.edu



Student Presentation Awards

Christy Briles, BSG Board Member 2018–20 and Student Presentation Awards Coordinator

Hello BSG members,

We are now taking applications for the 2020 student presentation competition to be held at the AAG annual meeting in Denver, Colorado. 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. Faculty please encourage your students to apply!

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 a completed application form (available at www.biogeographer.org) to christy.briles@ucdenver.edu.

The deadline for submissions is Monday, 3 February 2020.



Student Research Grant Competition

Will Flatley, BSG Board Member 2019-21 and Student Research Grant Coordinator

The Executive Board of the Biogeography Specialty Group (BSG) is pleased to announce the Annual BSG Student Research Grant Competition. The goal of the 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 based on: 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 February 17, 2020 to Dr. Will Flatley at wflatley@uca.edu. Specific proposal instructions are provided in the attached document.

For more information contact:
Will Flatley
University of Central Arkansas
wflatley@uca.edu

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Recent Publications

Articles:

1. Aide, T. M., H. R. Grau, J. Graesser, M. J. Andrade-Nuñez, E. Aráoz, A. Barros, M. Campos-Cerqueira, E. Chacon-Moreno, F. Cuesta, R. Espinoza, M. Peralvo, M. H. Polk, X. Rueda, A. Sanchez, K. R. Young, L. Zarbá, and K. S. Zimmerer. 2019. Woody vegetation dynamics in the tropical and subtropical Andes from 2001 to 2014: Satellite image interpretation and expert validation. *Global Change Biology* 25: 2112-2126.
2. Cusser, S., C. Grando, M. I. Zucchi, M. M. López-Urbe, N. S. Pope, K. Ballare, D. Luna-Lucena, E. A. B. Almeida, J. L. Neff, K. Young, and S. Jha. 2019. Small but critical: Semi-natural habitat fragments promote bee abundance in cotton agroecosystems across both Brazil and the United States. *Landscape Ecology* 34: 1825-1836.
3. Duchicela, S., F. Cuesta, E. Pinto, W. D. Gosling, and K. R. Young. 2019. Indicators for assessing tropical alpine rehabilitation practices. *Ecosphere*, DOI - 10.1002/ecs2.2595
4. Fadrique, B., S. Báez, Á. Duque, A. Malizia, C. Blundo, J. Carilla, O. Osinaga-Acosta, L. Malizia, M. Silman, W. Farfán-Ríos, Y. Malhi, K. R. Young, F. Cuesta C., J. Homeier, M. Peralvo, E. Pinto, O. Jadan, N. Aguirre, Z. Aguirre, and K. J. Feeley. Widespread but heterogeneous responses of Andean forests to climate change. 2018. *Nature* 564: 207-212.
5. Kim, D., P. Šamonil, G. Jeong, V. Tejnecký, O. Drábek, J. Hruška, and S. J. Park. 2019. Incorporation of spatial autocorrelation improves soil–landform modeling at A and B horizons. *Catena* 183:104226. doi.org/10.1016/j.catena.2019.104226.
6. Polk, M. H., K. R. Young, A. Cano, and B. León. 2019. Vegetation of Andean wetlands (bofedales) in Huascarán National Park, Peru. *Mires and Peat* 24: Article 01, 1-26. DOI: 10.19189/MaP.2018.SNPG.387
7. Pos, E., J. E. Guevara, J.-F. Molino, D. Sabatier, O. S. Bánki, N. C. A. Pitman, H. F. Mogollón, R. García-Villacorta, D. Neill, O. Phillips, C. Cerón, M. Ríos Paredes, P. Núñez Vargas, N. Dávila, A. Di Fiore, G. Rivas-Torres, R. Thomas-Caesar, C. Vriesendorp, K. R. Young, M. Tirado, O. Wang, R. Sierra, I. Mesones, R. Zagt, R. Vasquez, M. A. Ahuite Reategui, W. Palacios Cuenca, E. H. Valderrama Sandoval, and H. ter Steege. 2019. Scaling issues of neutral theory reveal violations of ecological equivalence for dominant Amazonian tree species. *Ecology Letters* 22: 1072-1082.
8. ter Steege, H., T. W. Henkel, N. Helal, et al. 2019. Rarity of monodominance in hyperdiverse Amazonian forests. *Scientific Reports* 9:13822
9. Young, K. R. 2019. Researching and teaching the Anthropocene. 2019. *Geographical Review* 109: 258-264.

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News

2020 Annual Meeting of the AAG, Denver, Colorado

The Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers is one of the largest geographic conferences in the world. Our next meeting, 6–10 April 2020, will be held in Denver, Colorado, at the Hyatt Regency. More information is available on the AAG Annual Meeting Webpage: <http://www.aag.org/cs/annualmeeting>

Notes

Teaching:

Kim Medley recently retired from Miami University (Ohio) and compiled many of her teaching photos into power-point presentations with notes on the OER Commons website. Check out these links if you need images to diversify your presentations or to provide additional student support for classes in biogeography.

Global Vegetation Types (<https://www.oercommons.org/courseware/module/35057>) focuses on the description of different vegetation types that may be of use as part of an introductory physical geography course (biogeography), or for a class focused on the study of plants and vegetation. All images unless noted were collected from Kim's travels to learn about vegetation over the past 40 years. *BSG compiled in the past a collection of photos on cd from BSG members—maybe you can use the OER site as a forum for sharing.*

Ethnobotany and Landscape Ethnoecology- As Process and Outcome (<https://www.oercommons.org/courseware/module/40989>) provides descriptive notes and images that can support teaching and learning about **ethnobotany** and **landscape ethnoecology**, or the integrative study of **human-resource relationships**. The photos and graphics are mostly derived from field study and research at Mt. Kasigau, Kenya (1999-2015) as a case example (see also http://www.users.miamioh.edu/medleyke/kasiplantbook_may2013_website.pdf).

Kim, thank you very much for sharing these wonderful resources and for your service to our discipline!

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. (www.biogeographer.org).

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 original BSG website (www.biogeographer.org). A motion was passed during the 2018 BSG Business Meeting to nominate Arvind Bhuta as the new BSG Webmaster. During the transition, the BSG has a second Website (<https://sites.google.com/view/biogeographer/home>). If you have links (or other materials), send up to 2–3 pages to Arvind, including syllabi for biogeography courses. You can contact him at (biogeographer.aag@gmail.com).
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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