



Department of Geography and Geospatial Sciences Kansas State University Annual Newsletter – Spring 2024



From the Department

Head, Chuck Martin

Welcome to the 2023 *K-State Geography Alumni Newsletter*, an opportunity for us to share news and happenings from the past year with alumni and friends of the Department of Geography and Geospatial Sciences! Thank you once again to my colleague Dr. Bimal Paul for putting together the alumni newsletter this year.



The university and department enjoyed a second “normal” year after the COVID 19 pandemic of 2020-2021. Student absences from classes were generally back to what they had been before the pandemic, although there were upticks as we transitioned into the colder weather of October and November. Classes in the department were taught “in person”, although nearly all meetings at the university, college, and department levels have a remote “zoom” option. The department’s online courses, whether offered in the three intersessions or during the summer, continued to be popular with students.

The department budget remained tight once again in 2023 as the College of Arts and Sciences slowly makes progress in reducing its financial deficit. As I noted last year, with the university’s current budget model, allocations to colleges are based primarily on student credit hour production. The College has seen persistent drops in student credit hours over the last several years, resulting in less revenue flowing to the College and then to departments. But the good news is that enrollment in the College stabilized and even increased slightly in Fall 2023 compared to Fall 2022. Better still, the department’s student credit hours continued the increase we experienced in 2022. For calendar year 2023, enrollment in the department was up 8% over 2022, and is now very close to the enrollment seen in academic year 2019-2020 prior to the pandemic. The

department continues to use a variety of sources to keep the department moving forward, including money generated by faculty who teach intersession and summer courses and indirect costs that the department receives from our faculty who have secured external research grants. We have also relied heavily on the many generous gifts and donations to our Foundation accounts. Those monies allowed us to continue providing extra support to our GTAs this year, thereby reducing the financial burden of the fees they pay each semester to the university before receiving their first GTA stipend payment in August.

As was the case in 2022, there was much good news from the department in 2023 to share with you! Dr. Vera Smirnova became our newest tenure-track faculty member in January 2024 as the department was able to convert her position from a non-tenure track to a tenure-track faculty line. Non-tenure track faculty members Dr. Laura Moley and Dr. Helene Avocat continued to make significant contributions to the department through their teaching, research, and service. The department’s Richard A. Marston Earth System Science Research Laboratory in Seaton 0108/0109 sees regular use from faculty and students in earth system science, and the department began planning to eventually install a ductless fume hood in the lab. Such a unit will broaden the types of materials that can be handled in the lab. We are seeing increasing interest and growth in the department’s Geographic Information Science & Technology (GIS&T) major, which was launched in August 2020. We continued to upgrade the Geospatial Teaching Lab on the third floor of Seaton Hall, a facility that sees heavy use during the semester from our many geospatial labs and studios. The College’s BS degree in Environmental Sciences that became available to KSU students in August 2021 continues to show phenomenal growth and is generating increased enrollment for GEOG courses that focus on environmental change and geospatial techniques. We were sad to lose our colleague Dr. Jida Wang, who accepted a faculty position at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign in August 2023. The members of the faculty and students

in the department enjoyed remarkable success in 2023 as you will read in the highlights on subsequent pages. The Steven Kale Scholarship Fund, endowed through the estate of the late Steve Kale, continues to provide scholarships to geography undergraduate and graduate students to pursue research in the summer and fall. The department's other Foundation funds continue to prosper thanks to the wonderful generosity of our alumni. In 2023, funds from geography Foundation accounts and other sources provided over \$50,000 of scholarship support to our undergraduate and graduate students. In addition to financial support, our alumni generously contribute their time and expertise, whether serving on the Geography Alumni Advisory Board, visiting in the classroom with students, or contacting the department about job and internship opportunities.

Student Highlights: The Geography and Geospatial Sciences Department had a strong and multinational group of graduate students and undergraduate majors in 2023. At the end of 2022, the department counted 15 PhD students, 6 MS students, 21 geography majors, and 10 geography minors. About 1900 students enrolled in Geography classes in calendar year 2023. In 2023, two students completed the PhD degree, one completed the MS degree, and six completed the BA/BS degree in geography. The very successful GIS certificate programs continue to flourish, and we have four students enrolled in the GIS&T major.

Our students and alumni are making a positive impact in business, industry, government, and academia. A recent survey by Career and Employment Services at K-State of our graduates indicated that 77% were employed and 23% were enrolled in a graduate or professional school. Those numbers are a testament to the quality of our program.

Staying Connected with You: In addition to our newly revamped department homepage (<http://www.k-state.edu/geography/>), the K-State Department of Geography and Geospatial Sciences has a Facebook page and a KSU Geography Alumni page. I hope you will check them out on a regular basis to keep up with events in the department and among our alumni. Although these are trying financial times for the College and the department, there are opportunities (e.g., new GIS&T major and new Environmental Sciences major, proposed online GIS Undergraduate Certificate) that stand to benefit the department and strengthen the role it will play in the college and university. On behalf of my colleagues, I want to thank our alumni, parents,

students, and friends for the gifts that support our students and help meet the needs of the department. Your generosity contributes substantially to the education of our students. As always, we welcome your comments about the department and K-State. Please stop by Seaton Hall and say "hello". Thanks to all of you for your ongoing and generous support of K-State Geography!

On a personal note, this will be my last "From the Department Head" contribution to the Alumni Newsletter as I will step down as department head on 1 July 2024 after serving in the position since 1 July 2011 (two years as interim head and 11 years as department head). I have enjoyed immensely working with many of our alumni, most of whom I knew as students in the department. Thank you for your generous support of the department in so many ways. My successor will be chosen early in 2024 following an internal search.

Personal Updates Faculty

Hélène Avocat

Greetings! And happy New year! Like many of you, 2023 was intense! My oldest son switched his major for Geology like his dad, and he will take some Geography and GIS classes at one point, which is exciting. And my second child is a senior in high school and looking forward to going to college!

Marcellus Caldas

The year of 2023 was an exciting year for me, in both the academic and in the personal (family) side. Academically, I was able to develop a new course, Environmental Justice, which came about through my various field excursions around the world. My field trips to forest areas allowed me to see the exploitation, degradation, and the emerging inequality of resource uses, and how society developed strategies to fight environmental inequalities. I thought that developing a course would be a good way to expose students to these problems. But 2023 was not only about creating



Welcome, Rhys! We love you!

courses. I stepped down from my administrative duties as assistant provost after 11.5 years in the Office of International Programs and I transitioned back to the department. My adaptation back was easy. I wrote proposals, which were very successful in acquiring funds. I have two new proposals funded and two proposals under evaluation. In terms of papers, you could imagine my happiness in publishing a paper in the journal *Science*, in addition to two important recognitions. First by the American Association for the Advancement of Science as an AAAS Fellow for distinguished contribution to the field of Land Use and Land Cover Change. Second by the Conference of Latin American Geographers with the ENLACE Award for my contributions to the development of Geography in Latin America.

But 2023 had more excitement waiting for me. I traveled with Martha to France, Spain, Brazil, Peru, and many other beautiful places in the U.S. Also, we (family!) had many milestones to celebrate. My father-in-law turned 90 years old, my mom turned 88 years old, and my dad turned 89 years old, and we were able to celebrate with them. These could be considered enough for me, but another surprise came around; my daughter Amanda told me that I would be a grandpa. Yes, no news could beat this one for me!

Doug Goodin

This past year seemed to pass rather quickly for me. A major highlight for me was spending some time in the spring with my dad. This was especially meaningful to me since he passed away in the fall. Family trips to Chicago, over the summer, and Santa Fe, around Christmas, were also highlights. While in Chicago, I had the opportunity to see *West Side Story* presented on the stage, and it was truly amazing. I had seen the movie some years earlier but had never seen the stage version done by a professional company. The trip to Santa Fe involved an afternoon learning how to make tamales at a course presented by the Santa Fe School of Cooking. I've always liked to cook, and learning how from professionals was great fun. Eating the work just added to the experience!

My research into the effect of disease and its associated stress on the spectral response of trees continues. My colleagues and I are about to submit a second paper on the topic. A newer project, in collaboration with faculty from the Colleges of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, involves analyzing urban mosquito habitats, with a goal of better understanding the transmission of

arboviruses. This is a new thing for me, but involves analysis of microclimates, which takes me deeply back into my academic roots. We'll see where this goes. I've also continued to work on methods for parameterizing canopy reflectance models, and exploring how complexity in time series constrains our ability to use them to predict surface dynamics.

Shawn Hutchinson

It's hard to believe that I'm now writing about events for the calendar year 2023...an amazing 23 year has passed since joining the amazing faculty in the Department of Geography and Geospatial Sciences! I want to share with our alumni that the department is thriving in the post-pandemic and enrollment cliff era as measured by our student credit hour generation and research productivity. As I'm sure Dr. Martin will mention, we are only one of three departments in the College of Arts & Sciences experiencing enrollment growth which is both a source of pride and evidence of the how are faculty have been responsive to changing student needs and emerging opportunities.

As I hinted at last year, much of my time in 2023 (and 2022) was spent advocating for geography and GIScience in interdisciplinary academic programs and research. Now, in addition to the new bachelor's degree programs in Environmental Science and Geographic Information Science & Technology, I'm pleased to report that the university has officially launched the Institute for Digital Agriculture and Advanced Analytics (ID3A), the first interdisciplinary

institute established through the Next-Gen K-State Strategic Plan and under the Office of the President. Geography is featured prominently in this new initiative, to include a geographer (me) serving as co-director of the institute. It's exciting to be able to break new ground at the university and have an opportunity to shape how we do research, teaching,



Shawn and Mitch in London next to the Broad Street Pump with the John Snow Pub in the background.

workforce development, and engagement in the rapidly evolving digital agriculture and analytics spaces.

Other research news includes ongoing funding for a grant from the National Park Service and approval of a new proposal submitted to the US Fish and Wildlife Service with alumnus Zac Eddy of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. I was also a co-PI on a significant NSF Major Research Infrastructure grant submitted in November last year and hope to be able to report success on this effort next year! I've welcomed one new MS student – Ifeoma Okonye – to work on the USFWS project and expect PhD candidates Amariah Fischer and Joel Radunzel to defend their dissertations this spring.

The Hutchinson family keeps plugging along and doing our best to stay out of trouble. Whenever possible, we've taken advantage of our new loft in Kansas City's River Market neighborhood for weekend getaways. Stacy continues serving the College of Engineering as Associate Dean for Research. Our son Mitch graduated in December 2022 with a BS in Computer Science and has taken a full-time job in Kansas City. We celebrated by taking a family trip to England over the holiday break and, among other activities, rewarded Mitch with two Premier League soccer games featuring his favorite team, Chelsea. We took in an away match at Wolverhampton and another at Stamford Bridge (Chelsea's home pitch). As some of you may have seen on Facebook, my treat was a visit to the Broad Street Pump and John Snow Pub in London. Our daughter Marleigh returned last spring from a successful study abroad in Prague and has (mostly) re-integrated into life in the United States. She turns 21 in February, will be traveling to Cambodia later this semester as part of her undergraduate research assistantship, and has accepted a summer internship with the engineering firm Black & Veatch in KC. The only real bad news we had this past year was the passing of our beloved chocolate lab Mocha. However, her yellow lab sister Maizy is keeping us on our toes!

As I do each year, I want to say a special thank you our alumni who visited or assisted our department and students over the past year. I very much enjoy catching up with former students and learning about the interesting things they are doing. If you happen to be on or near campus in the future, please do stop by for a visit!

Audrey Joslin

Happy New Year! This past year has included a lot of additional wonder and challenge as my daughter has grown from a tiny infant and into a chatty toddler who loves shoes, cats, and clocks. Alice turned one in October 2023, and it seems like every day she is learning a new skill. A highlight for our family was a summer trip to Colorado where we took a mountain cave tour, visited the US Olympic Museum, took a trolley ride around the Garden of the Gods, and successfully climbed to the top of Pike's Peak. Alice did great and I am excited to take her on more adventures as she gets older.

K-State has seemed to return somewhat to 'normal' following the pandemic, albeit with the new challenges and opportunities that ChatGPT has introduced to higher

education. My graduate students, Shreya Ojha, and Wyatt Cheney have been doing great work. Shreya advanced to PhD candidacy this past fall with the completion of her prelim exams, and I am looking forward to Wyatt defending his master's thesis later this spring. I taught the Geography of Water Resources course this Fall and enjoyed organizing a



Audrey, Michael, and Alice on top of Pike's Peak in Colorado.

few local field trips to examine water management issues. I was also excited to receive another grant from the National Science Foundation, this time to work with a team that is trying to make the use of prescribed fire as a land management technique safer across Kansas through advancing technology applications. This coming year I am looking forward to getting back into fieldwork again, as I will be attending a few prescribed burning events.

Abby Langston

In 2023, I had many highlights both professionally and personally. My students, Clay Robertson and Mou Chakravarty, are actively collecting data in the field and analyzing data from their respective research sites in the Buffalo River, Arkansas and Kings Creek, Konza Prairie, Kansas.

One of the professional highlights of the year for me was the publication of my paper from pioneering flume experiments that I conducted in the summer of 2018 in the journal *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms*. These flume experiments are the first to explicitly explore the conditions necessary to create wide bedrock valleys. Clay continues to build upon this first set of flume experiments with a more robust set of experiments conducted at St. Anthony Falls Laboratory (SAFL) at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, MN. The immense data set that Clay and I collected is especially exciting because this set of flume experiments is one of the very few to explore lateral bedrock widening rather than vertical bedrock incision. Clay will be working with the data as part of his PhD dissertation.

Another professional highlight for me was collaborating with colleagues from the Bureau of Reclamation on a project based near Pagosa Springs, Colorado. The goal of the project is to reconstruct the geomorphic history of tributaries of the San Juan River from many levels of strath terraces that range from 10–80 m above the current



Abby, Mou, and Clay doing field work in the San Juan Mountains, near Pagosa Springs, CO, October 2023.

river channel. Mou, Clay, and I spent five days in the field with several colleagues who are working on various aspects related to terrace formation and age. As part of her PhD dissertation, Mou will be developing numerical models to reconstruct possible scenarios of climate and tectonic movement when the terraces were created. I'm currently teaching Surface Water Hydrology (GEOG 440) every fall semester and teaching Fluvial Geomorphology (740) and Modeling Landscapes (GEOG 850) every other spring. I am really enjoying teaching this set of water-focused classes and developing hands on exercises student work with nearly every class period. The personal highlight of the year was that my family and I moved houses in Manhattan. We now are the proud owners of a beautiful 1928 home that is a 10-minute

walk from campus. Walking to work is definitely a highlight of my day!

Max Lu

My travel in 2023 was all related to AP Human Geography – a College Board program that has given hundreds of thousands of high school students every year a systematic exposure to human geography. In late May and early June, I was in the Queen City (Cincinnati) participating in the AP reading with several hundred fellow geography educators from around the United States. Walking around downtown Cincinnati or across the Ohio River to Kentucky was a fun after hour activity. Cincy has done a great job keeping its downtown thriving and exciting. The Over-the-Rhine area is a textbook example of gentrification in a historical working-class neighborhood. In July I taught an AP Human Geography workshop at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. A local city planner gave us a walking tour of the beautiful downtown in this Ozark Mountain town in Northwest Arkansas. On my way back, I made a point to stop by Bentonville to see the Walmart Home Office. The building was massive with a sprawling parking lot around it but it was so average looking that I initially couldn't believe that was the headquarters of the world's largest retailer! An employee I talked to told me Walmart tries hard to minimize its expenses so as to offer shoppers better deals ("Everyday low price") but she did tell me a new Home Office was under construction. An old Ford pickup truck on display outside the main entrance was the vehicle Sam Walton drove around town after he opened his first store in Rogers, AR. I bet no one at the time predicted that Sam's little mart would become a \$640 billion behemoth.

Chuck Martin

Most of my professional life was again dedicated to serving as department head in geography. As I noted in my department head summary, we continue to increase enrollment in our courses, which resulted in a slightly higher budget allocation for the current fiscal year to the department. Additional funds have been helpful in providing a small travel allocation to our graduate students this year but has been insufficient to bring frequent outside speakers to the department. Professionally, I enjoyed traveling to the AAG national meeting in Denver in March and seeing (for the first time

since 2019) several old friends and colleagues. In the fall I attended the Great Plains/Rocky Mountain AAG Division meeting in Sioux Falls, SD, and enjoyed interacting with our graduate students (and playing a round at the highest rated nine-basket disc golf course in Nebraska on the drive back to Manhattan). Summer featured the annual research trip to Germany in July and August. On the personal side, daughter Christine continues working on her MS in Environmental Engineering at the Technical University of Delft (Netherlands). I visited her for a week in early February and enjoyed fantastic weather, especially for western Europe in the winter. Son Nicholas works and lives in White River Junction, VT, and is loving all the outdoor activities that northern New England offers. I visited him over Memorial Day, making the rounds of disc golf courses in the area and sampling the many cloudy IPAs of the region. My wife Sabine continues to manage and run her environmental consulting company. I agreed to serve one additional year as department head in 2023, which will allow the new College dean to work with the department in early 2024 to choose my successor. I will return to life as a “normal” faculty member in August 2024, followed by a planned sabbatical in Spring 2025. Tentatively I am looking to retire in May or December 2026 after more than 35 years at K-State.

Kate Nelson

What a whirlwind the last year has been. The SCALes lab grown and has been hard at work on our projects related to crop diversity, rural resilience, and sustainable agricultural technologies. I was also happy to be a part of one of the awarded Game-changing Research Initiation Program (GRIP) transformational research projects this past year. The project offers an opportunity to integrate spatial data issues into the core of an artificial intelligence-based system for sustainable wheat supply chains. This past year has also



At least someone is enjoying this cold, snowy weather!

presented some new, but bittersweet, opportunities for our family. My husband and I will transition to new positions at the University of Missouri – Columbia in fall 2024. It was a difficulty decision to make but we are excited about the new possibilities that lie ahead. I am most grateful for the warm words of congratulations and the continued support of my colleagues and students throughout this transition. Hoping 2024 is a fantastic one for you and yours!

Bimal Paul

In summer of 2023, I completed five months staying in Nepal as a Fulbright Flex Fellow. My hotel is in the heart of Kirtipur close to the Tribhuvan University campus. From my hotel to the campus was five-minute walking distance. In addition, I walked almost every evening in the campus and/or surrounding areas of my hotel. Most of the Newari people of Nepal live in Kirtipur. Gautam Buddha was born Newari clan. Although they are Hindus, they equally respect Buddha and Buddhists. There are numerous Buddhist stupas and temples in Kirtipur. However, the summer temperatures were relatively nice – it was not too hot compared to South Asian countries or even Kansas. I conducted three field trips in rural areas in the two districts of the country. Academically, the 2023 was not as productive as the years before. On the family front, all our three children have been living and working in Kansas City areas. Our elder daughter has a dog (Kai) and younger daughter has three dogs (Pepper, Peanut, and Gus). We visit them at least once in a month.



In front of Tribhuvan University Central Library with a Computer Science Student.

Jeff Smith

2023 was a troubling year for much of the world given the natural disasters, famine, wars, and political discord. My heart goes out to all individuals who have lost family members. I wish each of you peace, happiness, and contentment. Please feel free to stop by my office when you find yourself in Seaton Hall.

Vera Smirnova

In comparison to a hectic 2022, 2023 put an end to immense bureaucratic hurdles that were hovering over my head for years – I have finally received a Green Card, getting much needed security in this turbulent world, started practicing driving with my first ever driver’s license, and my mom was able to obtain a US visa to visit her granddaughter for the first time. Academically, this



Vera, Zoya, and Zak on a hiking trip at the Mount Rainier National Park

year offered an opportunity to start off a new research project on Russian territorial sovereignty, publish in two leading journals in geography, travel to a couple of conferences in the US, and strengthen by collaborations with colleagues in Switzerland and Germany, which will keep me plenty busy in 2024. But most importantly, and most excitingly, I started a

tenure-track position in Geography and Political Science in December, and I am tremendously grateful to all my friends and colleagues for the continued support through all these years!

Arnaud Temme

In 2023, after my return from my sabbatical, it was in some way business as usual. It turned out that my classes still existed, and I enjoyed reconnecting with our students – especially my graduate students. Colleen, Nick, Mostafa and Harsimran are doing amazing research and have moved forward with energy. Their work expands our understanding of the functioning of Kansas hillslopes (Nick and Colleen) and of landslide systems (Mostafa and Harsimran).

Elsewhere in research, I have maintained my focus on alpine soils and their development as climate changes and glaciers retreat. I have organized a field study in the Austrian Alps in July, where I measured soil carbon fluxes to and from the atmosphere with students. Despite the horrible weather, that was a nice and successful experience, and the resulting dataset should be publishable this year.

I have continued travelling to Europe in 2023, to maintain ties with new colleagues there, and to visit family. My parents are getting older, and I want my kids to connect with them, as well as experience the multi-cultural, history-rich, gun-safe environment in Europe.

Emeritus Faculty

John Harrington

I wish I could be with each of you to share ideas and events. 2023 has been a busy year with some epic visits to awe-inspiring places and connecting with friends. A July trip to the dry side of the Cascades included a visit to Bend, OR, and the local volcanic features. That was followed by an overnight stay at the old lodge on the south side of Crater Lake NP (the accompanying pic is from the lodge about an hour before sunrise). The trip back home included visits to several waterfalls and wineries. In May, we did hikes and sightseeing along the Three Capes Scenic Loop on the Oregon coast. A September trip allowed us to drive Highway 2 across the Nebraska Sandhills and to visit a number of national parks/monuments including Rocky Mountain, Yellowstone, Devils Tower, and Wind Cave. In December we had five days in northern New Mexico just prior to Christmas; attending the Christmas eve event at Taos Pueblo takes care of a cultural bucket list item.

Doing our professional “geography thing” had Lisa and me at AAG in Denver and at APCG in Ventura, CA, in October. The AAG provided me with a plaque recognizing my 50 years of membership. APCG included a field trip to Channel Islands NP. I continued to co-author scholarly work in 2023, including three peer-reviewed publications, an AAG Newsletter contribution, and a geography encyclopedia entry. We are planning to spend several days at the AAG in Honolulu, along with sightseeing on the north coast of Oahu. We are also looking forward to driving to APCG in 2024, which will be held in Arcata, along the coast in northern California.

I continue to search out new waterfalls to experience and plan trips to interesting places within a day or two drive from home. The accompanying picture captures Palouse Falls, the Washington state waterfall in southeast WA, which we visited in early September.

My total of pints of blood donated to the Red Cross reached 53 with a post-Christmas bloodletting.

Lisa MB Harrington

My travels pretty much match John’s, so I won’t repeat those here. One trip he didn’t mention was up to Tacoma, to meet up with JW Harrington (another emeritus geography prof/now artist living in Washington and with the Harrington surname). Cool to have a visit with him and see his work in person. I received both 1st and 2nd place for mixed and other media in the annual southwestern Washington regional show of the Columbian Artists Association (a pastel and a photo collage, respectively). I was invited to be featured artist in the local Broadway Gallery for November, where about 24 of my works were on display; I have now been accepted as a gallery member. My final art news for the year was having a work selected for perhaps the largest state-wide annual juried exhibition in Washington (<https://www.collectivevisionsgallery.com/>). JW also had a work juried in, so we may be meeting up again at the opening.

Regarding professional geography activities, my last PhD student (Christy Jean) finished—woohoo! At John’s urging, I presented a poster at the APCG meeting based on the combination of art and science (“Connecting Art and Science: Participation in Art x Climate”) and selection of one of my works for the *Fifth National Climate Assessment Art x Climate* effort (“A Vision of Fire” is my first nationally juried work and appears in chap 27 of the assessment and the online gallery (nca2023.globalchange.gov/chapter/27, nca2023.globalchange.gov/art-climate/#artwork-all)).

At the AAG meeting in Denver, I was honored with the lifetime achievement award from the Rural Geography specialty group. A very meaningful award, with comments by RGSG members, and especially Ryan Bergstrom, greatly appreciated. I still help out with RGSG activities as requested.

If any of you want to get in touch, please do! My ksu email still works, and from there I can provide other means (Gmail, etc.). Have a great 2024, and I hope a number of you can make it to AAG in Hawaii!



“Fall Path”
(photo collage)



“At the Edge”
(watercolor)



“Steller’s Jay”
(watercolor)

Bobbie & David Kromm

In August our granddaughter, Emma Kromm, and her fiancée James Piltch were married in Vermont. Bobbie and I were the honored grandparents. Emma and Jamie are third-year law students at Yale. We both turned 85 in September, and on Dave’s birthday we ascended Mt. Sunflower, the highest point in Kansas at 4019 feet.



Dr. Richard A. Marston

We enjoyed some travel in 2023, including a trip in March to Vegas, Zion NP, Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park, and Scottsdale (for spring training baseball and desert hiking). I attended the AAG in Denver, where it was mighty fine to see K-State colleagues, former students, and my son, Bryce (PhD 2017 K-State GEOG) who is working for the State of Wyoming Climate Studies Office. In June, Nancy and I returned to Vegas for a 50+2 year high school reunion, followed by a trip to Mule Days in Bishop and on to Oregon and western Washington. We continue to divide our time in California between Newport Beach and Big Bear Lake, welcoming friends, family, and former students for a visit.

Current Graduate Students

Neda Mohamadzadeh

In the year 2023, my second year in the United States was full of new experiences. I got more comfortable in the country and adjusted to academic life after being away for a while. Embarking on my PhD research journey, I delved into the development of a high-resolution soil moisture dataset. Notably, my colleagues, Dr. Caldas and I successfully published our first paper on this subject in the "Science of Remote Sensing" journal, with another publication currently in progress.

Thanks to the support from the department, I had the chance to present the initial findings of my research in

the form of posters at AAG GPRM (Great Plains-Rocky Mountain) Annual Meeting and AGU (American Geophysical Union) conference, gaining valuable insights and feedback from the academic community.

I also spent three months in the "soil water lab" within the Department of Agronomy over the summer. Engaging in both laboratory experiments and fieldwork alongside passionate colleagues, I deepened my understanding of soil physics, a crucial asset for advancing my research endeavors. Furthermore, achieving the Graduate Geographic Information Science (GIScience) Certificate from the department marked a significant milestone, bringing me one step closer to realizing my academic goals and pursuing my passion in the field.

Harsimran Singh Sodhi

I am a second year Ph.D. student and conducting my research in landslides detection, prediction, and landslides spatial and temporal analysis using Remote Sensing and GIS. In the past year, I made a significant progress in my Ph.D. program at K-State. When I talk professionally, the 2023 beginning was very productive for me as I was one of the co-authors in one of the conference abstracts which was presented by my advisor (Dr. Arnaud Temme) at European Geosciences Union 2023 held in Vienna, Austria. Also, I got a Marston Muddy Boots Fellowship for my research field study. For Fall 2023, I was selected as a research mentor for NRES capstone course where I taught undergrad students research on GIS applications on habitat suitability modelling for endangered bird species called "Least Tern" using ArcGIS Pro and R programming. I also got some leadership skills as I was a lead TA for GEOG 122 course in Fall 2023. I also got an opportunity to present a research poster at regional AAG conference held in South Dakota. In terms of technology, thanks to K-State and Geography department as I learnt many software which involves the use of GIS and statistical modelling. In my Ph.D. thesis also, I did significant progress as I am very close to complete my first research objective.

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Alumni

Mat Gerike

The fall of 2023 marked my sixth year living in the Virginia Tidewater region. I continue to work for the Virginia Geographic Information Network, which serves enterprise GIS functions for the Commonwealth of Virginia and maintains the Virginia GIS Clearinghouse, but my role is primarily supporting GIS needs across Virginia's 133 local governments. I continue to use geography every day to connect with those I'm working with and understand some of the physical, environmental, human-environment, cultural, culinary, economic, and historical threads. On the academic front, I continue to teach a course a semester at William & Mary and engage with colleagues in a variety of research projects.

I've had fun collaborating with Johnny Finn from Christopher Newport University on several of his gallery exhibits on social justice themes in Hampton Roads by designing custom large-scale floor maps using high resolution aerial photography. The largest so far uses 12-inch imagery across 1,250 square feet of floor space at 1:6,500 scale printed on sticky textured vinyl commonly used for floor signage. (For contrast, the map in the provided picture is 660 square feet at 1:8,400 scale.)

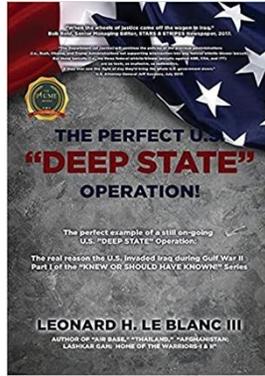


While we can zoom in and explore imagery at detail on our phones or computer screens, it is quite different exploring imagery and landscapes at such large scales when you are *on* the map and *in* the map and can view broad areas at the same resolution without panning. The next exhibit, planned for Fall 2024, should be the largest yet.

Looking forward to connecting with those that may find their way to URISA's GIS Pro Conference October 2024 in Portland, Maine.

Leonard Le Blanc

In May 2003 I received the Prime International's AUTHOR OF THE YEAR AWARD-ASIA for 2003 for my explosively controversial book THE PERFECT U.S. "DEEP STATE" OPERATION! in Bangkok, Thailand. In January 2024 I will receive the Prime International's AUTHOR OF THE YEAR AWARD-GLOBAL for 2023 for the same book in Goa, India. Since U.S. presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., also received a Prime International award, but could not attend the awards ceremony in Goa due to his hectic campaign appearance schedule, I was asked to receive the award on his behalf.



I reprinted my Vietnam War era military detective mystery novels AIR BASE and THAILAND. I also published a nonfiction book about Thailand's colorful people, places, events, things, and some interviews called THAI VIGNETTES-I. It is the first in a series of six books. They are a compilation of articles I had published (or will have published) for EXPAT LIFE IN THAILAND magazine. My wife Lena, and children L.J. and J.L. are still enjoying Bangkok very much.

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Selected Faculty Accomplishments

Helene Avocat

- Improving my book about thematic mapping (it's like a never-ending task)!
- Collaborations with colleagues from public health, Biology and Geology mainly on water quality issues in various parts of the world, related or not with cancer incidence.
- Our NSF Grant about groundwater quality in the Great Bend aquifer. Preliminary results are very interesting, and I can't wait to see what the other field trips will uncover!

Marcellus Caldas

- de Marco Jr., P., Souza, R., Andrade, A.F.A., Villen-Perez, S., Nóbrega, C.C., Motta, L.C., and Marcellus Caldas. 2023. The value of private properties for the conservation of biodiversity in the Brazilian Cerrado. Science. Vol. 380 (6642): 298-301.
- "Stakeholder-guided holistic, Adaptive Framework for enhancing community Energy Resilience (SAFER)", PIs:

Bala Natrahajan, Jason Bergtold, Marcellus Caldas. DOE \$976,699 (Funded).

- "Solar Power as a Mechanism to Strengthen Food Security, Rural Development, and Land Conservation." PIs: Jason Bergtold, Marcellus Caldas, Bala Natarajan, Global Food System. \$199,742, (Funded).

Doug Goodin

- Funded proposal: Impact of Microclimate on Mosquito Populations and Arbovirus Transmission in the Midwest. GRIP Development Funding.
- Submitted manuscript: Estimation of Flint Hills Tallgrass Prairie Productivity and Fuel Loads: A Model-Based Synthesis and Extrapolation of Experimental Data. (R.B. McKane, lead author).
- Published Manuscript: Bat diversity and hantavirus infection in fragmented landscapes of south-eastern Brazil, (G. Sabino-Santos, Lead Author).

Shawn Hutchinson

- Recent publications in Journal of Hydrology, Agronomy Journal, and three National Park Service papers.
- Renewed research grant with the National Park Service, new grant awarded by US Fish and Wildlife Service, and named co-director of the Institute for Digital Agriculture and Advanced Analytics.
- Fun trips to Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Montana, and England!

Audrey Joslin

- Part of team awarded National Science Foundation grant for project: "Smart and Safe Prescribed Burning for Rangeland and Wildland Urban Interface Communities."
- Published first paper in the journal Natural Hazards from wildfire and conservation project with colleagues.
- Received William L. Stamey Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching from K-State's College of Arts and Sciences.

Abigail Langston

- Published "Wide bedrock valley development and sensitivity to environmental perturbations: insights from flume experiments: in Earth Surface Processes and Landforms 2023
- Initiated collaboration with several scientists at the Bureau of Reclamation to work on a fluvial terrace project near Pagosa Springs, CO.
- Submitted the first manuscript to come from my Buffalo River project to Journal of Geophysical Research: Earth Surface. The manuscript is based on the work of master's student Olivia Groeber (2022).

Max Lu

- Moseley, William G., Max Lu, Greg Hill. 2023. A Bridge between Two Worlds: Why Advanced Placement Human Geography is Good for the Discipline of Geography. *The Professional Geographer*, 75(6): 871-881.
- I gave a keynote speech at the 2023 Geography Education in the 21 Century Virtual Conference organized by the Illinois Geographic Alliance and the Department of Geography, Geology, and the Environment at Illinois State University.
- Redesigned my GEOG100-World Geography & Globalization online course.

Chuck Martin

- Served as member of the Editorial Board for the journal *Geomorphology*.
- Manuscript on persistence of trace metals in the Lahn River published in *Geomorphology*.
- Served a tenth year as department head (or twelfth year if the two years prior to it as interim head are counted).

Kate Nelson

- Recent publications in *PLOS One*, the *Journal of Rural Studies*, and *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems* and two research datasets published on Zenodo.
- Co-PI of the project "Towards a Global Food Systems Data Hub: Seeding the Center for Sustainable Wheat Production" funded by the Kansas State University Game-changing Research Initiation Program (GRIP) (July 2023 – May 2026, \$950,000).

Bimal Paul

- Completed Fulbright Flex Fellowship program in Nepal.
- Signed an edited book contract with Routledge on *Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness*.

Vera Smirnova

- Wrote a piece for the *Transaction of the Institute of British Geographers*, after the publication of another paper in the *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*.
- Presented my research at the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies and was able to hire a brilliant research assistant Sierra Salazar to start off a new project thanks to a Jones Family Award from Political Science.
- Started my new tenure track appointment in Geography and Political Science in December, for which I am thrilled!

Jeff Smith

- My graduate student (Sande Williams) and I wrote a 7,000-word entry on Cultural Geography for the forthcoming *Dictionary of Human Geography* edited by Barney Warf (Springer).

- I assembled lectures and PowerPoint presentations for my new class – GEOG 510 (Geography of the American West).
- I began collecting data/information for a new research project that focuses on Gateway Communities in the American West.

Arnaud Temme

- Preparation of a proglacial soil chronosequences in the Austrian Alps during the summer.
- Publication of two papers focused on the Flint Hills landscape and its dynamics.
- Converting and creating of an open-source book that will save thousands of dollars for the hundreds of our students that take GEOG121.

Editor: Dr. Bimal Paul (bkp@ksu.edu)