Welcome to our 2011 K-State Geography Alumni Newsletter, an opportunity for us to share with you...our alumni and friends...the news of the past year. As I reflect on 2010, we have many reasons to be optimistic about the future of our department and the university. Our faculty and students enjoyed some remarkable success in 2010. Two new student scholarship endowed funds have been established by K-State Geography alumni. These two new funds follow the creation of the Geography Alumni Fund (for student support) that was established in 2009 and to which all alumni can contribute. Alumni of our department support K-State Geography in a number of other ways. For instance, Jason Sheeley has continued to organize a Geography Career Day in the spring to help our students secure jobs, internships, and otherwise gain experience in preparing resumes and conducting interviews. In addition to awards and scholarships, we use donated funds to assist students in their travel to professional meetings and professional development workshops. We are very grateful for all support.

Faculty Highlights: Geography faculty continue to be very successful in research...obtaining funding support, employing students in research projects, presenting papers and posters at national and regional meetings, and publishing in high-quality forums. Dr. Kendra McLauchlan was one of two geographers in the country who was presented with a $440,000 NSF CAREER Award, given to early career scholars who show great promise. Kendra will use the award to build her research program in examine change over time in vegetation and other ecosystem properties. Another one of our faculty has been a participant on 15 university grants over the past 5 years. Yet another faculty member authored an article in 2010 that was #3 on the list of Top 10 most downloaded articles worldwide for a 3-month period. K-State Geography faculty (currently 13.2 FTE) have authored over 90 refereed journal articles and 48 book chapters in the past 5 years. Over that same period, faculty presented over 300 papers at professional meetings and seminars...places where recruitment of new new students also takes place! This is excellent, especially when one considers our heavy responsibilities in teaching, advising, and service. The rankings by students of our classroom instruction reached an all-time high this past year. See the article later in this Newsletter about our rankings in the NRC Assessment of Doctoral Programs.

Student Highlights: We’ve had an outstanding year attracting stellar students. We have a record 120 students currently majoring in Geography (BA + BS) in Fall 2010...another (December) high water mark...as well as a sizeable number of graduate students (13 MA + 17 PhD + 10 ABD = 40). This will likely climb to a record high of 140 majors by the end of Spring 2011 Semester in May 2011. Enrollment in Geography classes for 2010 reached an all-time record of 4610. Three of our students were awarded their Ph.D. in 2010: Vicki Tinnon, David Koch, and Jacob Sowers...now professors at the University of Alabama, Dubuque University, and Missouri State University, respectively. We have had a total of 20 students complete the Ph.D. in Geography at K-State since our first graduates in 2000. This is wonderful. Several others will finish in early 2011. We continue to graduate a number of students with the M.A. and B.A./B.S. in Geography each year.
40 students have completed the Graduate Certificate in GIScience, including students from 10 departments in four colleges. 33 students have completed the undergraduate certificate in GIS.

Our graduates are taking their place in business, industry, government, and academia. Our students have been selected for a remarkable array of awards outside the department as well as the annual departmental awards that are presented during our annual Spring GTU/Geography Banquet. You will read about some of the highlights in the pages that follow.

**Staying Connected with You:** In addition to our webpage ([http://www.k-state.edu/geography/](http://www.k-state.edu/geography/)) the K-State Department of Geography now has a Facebook page, and a KSU Geography Alumni page also exists. Check them out! I am always grateful to our alumni, parents, students, and friends for the gifts that support our students and other department needs. Your gifts make a difference and provide truly excellent educational opportunities. We are funding students at a higher rate (for travel, and as GTAs/GRAs) than at any time in the past. 28 students presented at the 2010 AAG meeting in Washington, D.C.! I always welcome your comments about the department and K-State. When you are visiting campus, please stop by Seaton Hall to say hello and to tour the department, including our renovated teaching and research labs.

Thanks for all you do for K-State Geography!

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**January letter from K-State President Kirk Schulz**

*To K-State Geographers, present and past:*

I hope you had a fun and relaxing holiday break. Campus was pretty quiet the first week in January, and as many of you know, it was easy to walk right into many of the restaurants in Aggieville with no wait!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank alumni from the K-State Geography Program for your support of the department. Also, I invite you to return to campus to visit the faculty and tour the improved classroom and research lab facilities.

Like many of you, I will decide to try some new things to start off 2011. Like many Americans, I generally vow to exercise a bit more, and try and ensure that I don’t get too run down with work-related activities.

With these New Year motivations in mind, I stepped on the treadmill, pulled out my iPhone, went to the iPod icon, and picked some songs to play while exercising. Since I am the 13th president of Kansas State - I will share 13 songs on my iPhone that remind me of how special 2010 was at K-State …

Song #13 - “Sunshine on My Shoulders” by John Denver. Why? K-State opened up two LEED certified buildings in Manhattan - the School of Leadership Studies building and the expansion of the Jardine Student Complex.

Song #12 - “Chariots of Fire Theme” by Vangelis. Why? K-State student athletes continue to excel in the classroom as Kansas State University led the Big 12 in the all-sports graduation rate for the fourth consecutive year.

Song #11 - “The Entertainer” by Billy Joel. Why? The arts continue to thrive on campus as the McCain center enjoyed sellouts of four of its seven shows for the Fall 2010 semester.
Song #10 - “Shake It Up” by The Cars. Why? K-State attracted terrific new leaders into senior administrative positions - April Mason as Provost and Senior VP, Bruce Shubert as VP for Administration and Finance, Jeff Morris as VP for Communications and Marketing, Ken Stafford as Vice Provost for Information Technology, Jackie Hartman as Director of Community Relations and Assistant to the President, and Ruth Dyer as Senior Vice Provost.

Song #9 - “We Are The Champions” by Queen. Why? K-State once again crowned several new national champions across a range of disciplines. This year’s champions included the K-State Salina SIFE Team, the Crops Judging Team (who won their ninth national title in last 12 years), and a group of Construction Science and Management Students who won the American Concrete Institute's International Competition.

Song #8 - “Money, Money, Money” by Abba. Why? K-State attracted nearly $91M in private gifts - the fourth highest in history. We attracted two $5M gifts in 2010 - the Edgerley family endowed deanship in CBA and the Berney Capital Projects fund to assist with construction of the student welcome center and basketball practice facility. Additionally, K-State finished another record year in new grants and contracts with nearly $150M recorded during the last fiscal year.

Song #7 - “Drink the Night Away” by Gaelic Storm. Why? Eric Stonestreet (1996, BA Sociology) won an Emmy award for best supporting actor in a comedy for his role as Cameron Tucker in ABC’s “Modern Family.”

Song #6 - “The River of Dreams” by Billy Joel. Why? K-State announces the K-State 2025 initiative, which seeks to place Kansas State University among the Top 50 Public Research Universities in the next 15 years.

Song #5 - “Now We Are Free” - Gladiator Soundtrack. The Big 12 Conference moves into 2011 with only 10 members following the departure this summer of the University of Colorado to the Pac 10 and the University of Nebraska to the Big 10.

Song #4 - “Victory” by Bond. Why? Kansas State once again had a record enrollment, including the overall number of students, international students, and students of color.

Song #3 - “Another Day in Paradise” by Phil Collins. Why? Two K-State academic programs celebrated 100 years of service to the State of Kansas - the A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications and the Department of Grain Science and Industry.

Song #2 - “I Am The Very Model of a Modern Major General” - Gilbert & Sullivan. Why? Six K-State faculty members received CAREER Development Awards from the National Science Foundation, the most by any university in Kansas last year and a record year for K-State.

Song #1 - “First Snow” by Trans-Siberian Orchestra. Why? A microburst hit campus two weeks prior to the beginning of the Fall semester, downing 50 trees on campus - including some that were over 100 years old. Thanks to some excellent work by our facilities people, campus was ready to go for Sorority Rush three days later.

So, the next time that favorite song of yours starts playing on the radio or you scroll past it on your iPod - sing or hum to the music and enjoy the memories of the successes you were part of as a member of the K-State family in 2010 and in prior years.

Here’s looking at a great 2011!
Go Cats,
Kirk
**Faculty News**

**Kevin Blake:** Happy new year to all Wildcat geographers! In April 2010, I greatly enjoyed the opportunity during the AAG meeting to re-unite with geographers and see many landmarks along the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Everyone should plan a trip to DC in one of the milder months. I also continued my research on mountain symbolism in Colorado during July, and enjoyed a chance to visit western Oregon and northern California for a Zane Grey’s West Society convention in June. Once again, Crater Lake offered views of the bluest water I’ve ever seen. My spring courses were Geography of the American West and Mountain Geography, and in the fall I offered World Regional Geography and the Perception of the Environment seminar. Two new books used in the West course were *Buffalo for the Broken Heart* by Dan O’Brien and *Historical Atlas of the American West* by Derek Hayes. Both are good reads – O’Brien’s book is humorous and engaging story about his attempt at buffalo ranching in the northern Great Plains on the margin of the Black Hills in South Dakota, and the atlas has wonderfully vivid color reproductions of historical and recent maps and brochures. I also used a famous book in Mountain Geography (new for the course, but first published in 1933): *Lost Horizon* by James Hilton. Never heard of it? That is the usual reaction (indeed, I had not read it until two years ago), but this is the book that popularized the term “Shangri-La” and imbued this mythical mountain retreat with alluring and fantastic qualities. As you might sense, reading occupies much of my time, all the more so with my work for the K-State Book Network, a relatively new common reading program for K-Staters. We chose a futuristic dystopian novel, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, as the first book in the program for fall 2010; next year’s book will be *Zeitoun* by Dave Eggers, a non-fiction book about the experience of a Muslim-American family living in New Orleans before, during, and immediately after Hurricane Katrina.

**Marcellus Caldas:** The year of 2010 was a good and productive year for me. I was able to develop a new online Human Geography course and a study abroad course in Brazil. With two other professors (one from Biology and other from English) we took ten students to the Brazilian Amazon to explore how people live in the Brazilian Amazon region. This study abroad focused on reconciling regional economic development with environmental sustainability. Through various field excursions, readings, lectures, and discussions the students considered how the need of local people could be met while at the same time protecting the rainforest. This course was a success and we are offering a new version of this course for 2011 with new and exciting experiences. But 2010 was not only about creating courses. I also wrote proposals and papers, and I had the opportunity to present a paper at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers in Washington, DC. My research agenda allowed me to published two papers in two prestigious journals (the World Development Journal and the Journal of Latin American Geographer). Also, three more papers were accepted for publication and I hope they will come out in 2011. In the proposal side, I have been granted funds from the U.S. Secretary of Education trough the FIPSE program. This proposal (Globalization: Socio-economic, Political, and Environmental Interdependence) supports the creation of a new and innovative exchange program between faculty and students from the U.S. and Brazil. This new program will focus on bio-economy, global environmental change, and global environmental politics. Building on collaborative faculty research and the international experience of partner institutions, we propose a 21st century education program that combines integrated and interactive classrooms and social networking with student research opportunities, language training, cultural exchange, as well as a multidisciplinary undergraduate curriculum that will be co-created and co-taught by project participants in the U.S.A. and in Brazil.
The end of 2010 couldn’t be better. I had family members coming to the U.S. for the holidays, and I was invited to be a member of the editorial board of the Professional Geographer, a journal of the American Association of Geographers. I have good expectations for 2011.

Melinda Daniels: 2010 has been a busy year full of personal and professional growth for me in my third year at Kansas State Geography! I was officially promoted to Associate Professor and tenured this past summer, and with that has come new responsibilities. Much of my time was consumed with transitioning into the position of Graduate Program Director for our department. I worked closely with Dr. Kevin Blake in the spring to ensure a smooth transition over the summer as he takes on new endeavors after over five years of dedicated effort managing the graduate program. Kevin has been a wonderful mentor, and I am very grateful for his help! I also embarked on some new teaching adventures, offering GIS 1 and World Regional Geography to help fill gaps left by sabbaticals and retirements in the department.

Perhaps the most exciting part of my year was the addition of four new PhD students to my research program. For me, working with graduate students is the most rewarding part of my job, and I am delighted to have a vibrant, growing graduate research group now established at K-State. My students are working on a variety of river-related topics, including Kansas River confluence dynamics, the effects of grazing treatments on Flint Hills streams, riparian management on the Pottawatomie Nation, channel dynamics of the pre-engineered Missouri River, and stream ecosystem function in disturbance regimes. I also have my “own” research programs focused primarily on the Kansas River at the moment. Three of my funded Kansas River projects are examining: 1) the impacts of in-channel sand-dredging operations on fish habitat and sediment dynamics, 2) the impact of the Bowersock hydropower dam in Lawrence on sediment dynamics, and 3) prioritizing areas of the Kansas River Basin for conservation and/or restoration efforts. I am also becoming increasingly involved in a riparian vegetation removal experiment at the Konza Prairie, working closely with Walter Dodds and other KSU biologists.

Personal highlights of 2010 included a family camping trip to Rocky Mountain National Park with husband, Rob (GISSAL Operations Manager), and our 3 year old son and 1 year old daughter. We had a ton of fun hiking and camping and exploring the park. From RMNP, we toured up through the mountains to Saratoga, Wyoming for a peak at some research sites in the Medicine Bow National Forest and a research collaboration meeting with USFS personnel.

Doug Goodin: 2010 started ended on the road. In January, I traveled to Kiev, Ukraine as part of a new project to map Tularemia and some other pathogens in that country. Despite the bitter cold (the warmest it got all week was 7 °F), I enjoyed seeing the historical city and meeting Ukrainian colleagues. I discovered that Ukrainian and Russian food is quite good, that official meetings often include toasting (which certainly makes things more collegial, but is not really conducive to productivity) and that heat in buildings is irregular, at best. In May, I returned to Ukraine, this time also visiting the port city of Odessa. In Odessa, I attended and presented at a conference on landscape epidemiology and was pleased to meet some of the academic progeny of Pavlovsky, the founder of that field. I am looking forward to returning to Ukraine next spring, and this time getting a chance to see the rural countryside. The May trip also included a stop over in Athens for the 2010 International Hantavirus meetings, which provided an opportunity to reconnect with friends and colleagues, and also see the historical sites in the Plaka and the Acropolis district. The view of the Acropolis lit up at night, enjoyed from a rooftop restaurant, was well worth the trip. This trip was not without some exciting travel moments, owing to the ash clouds from the Icelandic volcanic eruptions, but all-in-all, I enjoyed it. My year ended with holiday visits with my family in Indiana and California, a perfect way to relax after a busy year. Despite my research and teaching schedule, I am managing to keep up with my other interests. I'm
continuing to compete in rowing, and have amassed a modest collection of medals. I am also busy trying to teach my dog to skiijor. It’s a little hard to keep her focused on the task, but when she is, it's a pretty amazing feeling. I am looking forward to a trip to Utah this spring for some backpacking and possibly a little climbing.

**John Harrington:** I continue to find a few things to keep me busy (notice I did not say: ‘keep me out of trouble’). One highlight for the year came with an LTER (Long Term Ecological Research) social science research team meeting in Fairbanks in early October. That trip got me to my 50th state in the US. Maybe now I need to concern myself with the territories, since I’m not making progress at all on the High Points.

A sabbatical happened during Spring 2010 with me in Manhattan most of the time, taking care of research and writing projects. My work with the Kansas Geographic Alliance had me taking the equivalent of a 3-hour mostly on-line graduate level class in strategic planning during January, February, and March. I also continue to take care of organizing the team of about twenty people that are needed to hold the annual early spring state-level Geographic Bee competition for National Geographic. It is always mind-boggling to observe the levels of geographic knowledge that the 4th-8th graders have attained. A personal highlight during the spring was an April trip over to Lawrence to hear Steve Schneider speak about his book, *Science as a Contact Sport*.

With the change to the Obama Administration, a number of funding opportunities related to climate change became available and it was nice that my colleagues from across campus wanted me to join their teams to go after research dollars/projects. While several attempts bombed, one was a success and K-State was awarded a highly competitive NSF Climate Change Education Partnership and two years of funding.

The Fall semester had me again teaching the grad seminar on Geographic Thought, as well as the Environmental Geography II class that deals with geographic aspects of the atmosphere and the biosphere. The EG II class involved a good deal of preparation since the last time I taught it was pre-Powerpoint in the late 20th Century. Students continue to tell me that, despite how hard my exams are, they really learned a lot and it was a good class. A good deal of the summer was spent assisting with moving Lisa’s mom from Astoria, OR, to Roswell, NM, or as one person commented, ‘from Goonies to Aliens.’ Sometime more than halfway through the packing of items from the one-story house in Astoria, I commented that the neighbors must think this place is like a ‘clown car’ based on the long and continued process of bring more and more items out to pack into the UHaul trucks.

Another interesting activity has been the drawn-out process of getting doctors’ opinions on what to do regarding my osteoarthritis. X-rays suggest that I’ve got the disease in the knees and the hips, with perhaps the more major problem with both hips. Next steps involve additional consultation and opinions on which part(s) of me should become bionic first, and perhaps joint replacement surgery sometime in early 2011.

**Lisa Harrington:** It’s time again to write about the last year, and 2010 was ‘just packed.’ The big professional travel (and there was a lot of professional travel) included two trips to Romania. The first was in May, as part of an invited group representing the AAG—the Romanian human geography community has wanted to develop more connections with American geographers, and particularly with the AAG. We were able to visit geography departments and geographers in four cities, and to see a nice bit of the country. Somehow as part of this, I’ve ended up on the editorial boards for three Romanian geography journals. I returned to Sibiu in November as a guest speaker, and as part of my short stay was treated with trips to two ‘villages’ (complete with visits with the mayors), a visit with a prosperous Romanian shepherd, and a trip to the Romanian Alps and cable car ride to lunch at a lodge beside a tarn.

On the more personal side, I had several trips to Astoria, Oregon, to check up on my mother, and then three trips from Astoria to Roswell, New Mexico, to move her to be near my brother and his wife. These trips were marathons: a two-day drive with my sister-in-law sharing U-Haul driving, a flight back to Astoria, a trip to drive my mom in her
completely stuffed car, a flight back, and a third trip
with another mega-U-Haul on the way back to
Kansas...complete with a blow-out and a broken
belt. Son Colin was a great co-pilot on the last run,
keeping NPR tuned in except for when we were in
the least radio-accessible drive sections.
Adventures in moving, indeed! I ended ‘summer
vacation’ needing a vacation. We now have a K-
State sophomore (Ian), as well as a Manhattan High
senior (Colin). (Looking at college expenses for
two next year is getting kind of scary.)
I’m hoping to have less travel in the coming year,
and a bit more sanity. My term on AAG Council
and two years as Secretary will end in June, and that
will be a professionally bittersweet event—I have
really enjoyed Council activities, but—especially as
Secretary—this has required quite a bit of time.
I’ll close this year’s notes with my best wishes to all
of the department’s friends and alumni, and hopes
that you’ll keep in touch. Ciau!

Shawn Hutchinson: I am back in Manhattan after
spending the 2009-2010 academic year on
sabbatical leave. Though physically present here in
Kansas, many might say that mentally I am still in
the south of France! Days after returning from
Europe, I was in the field for much of June and July
collecting data as part of an environmental
monitoring project at Fort Riley. Then, before I
knew it, August and the beginning of the fall
semester was here. This past fall, I was the
instructor for GEOG 508 (GIS 1) and GEOG 708
(GIS 2). These courses continue to draw increasing
enrollments as geographers and non-geographers,
alone, realize the importance of GIS in private and
public sector employment. We have also been busy
continuing the expansion of our GIS and GIScience
curriculum in the department. Recently, we added
GEOG 808 (Geocomputation) as a graduate level
course and this spring I will offer another new
graduate course called “Internet GIS and
Distributed Geographic Information Services”.
Two large research projects occupy much of my
time. My wife Stacy Hutchinson (Biological &
Agricultural Engineering) and I are co-PI’s for the
Fort Riley Range and Training Land Assessment
Program. Over the past year, we have been busy
restructuring this program to provide real, or near-
real, time data and information for Fort Riley land
managers using a combination of remote sensing,
GIS, and internet delivery of map, data, and
geoprocessing services. This keeps me quite busy
and happy. We have also been collaborating with a
colleague from France, Dr. Anne Jaquin, on
examining temporal trends in vegetation data at Fort
Riley. We hope to be able to do some joint research
on military training lands in both the U.S. and the
European Union. Stacy and I are also in the third
year of a product funded by the Department of
Defense and Department of Energy where we are
evaluating the performance of a rapid soil erosion
assessment model we developed a few years ago.
We are validating model performance across seven
different military installations, so we get to visit
some interesting places and conduct extensive field
work across a number of different environments
ranging from rain forest to desert.

The Geographic Information Systems Spatial
Analysis Laboratory (GISSAL) keeps humming
along, as well. The lab now has two dedicated staff
members, including Robert Daniels (Operations
Manager) and Shiva Mohandass (GIS Applications
Developer), along with a number of graduate and
undergraduate students who assist with extramural
research projects. Graduate student Jeremy Aber
helps keep all of our computers, and increasing
number of servers, up and operational despite my
best attempts to break them.

Our children Mitch (9) and Marleigh (7) have
“reintegrated” back into the U.S. educational system
and are doing well. Soccer and basketball activities
have kept all of us very busy in the evenings and on
weekends. Our now elderly golden retriever Matty
(14) is still very active and an integral part of our
family. In July, we also added another puppy to the
mix, a chocolate lab named Mocha.

Max Lu: As the alumni board liaison, I would like
to wish everyone a very happy new year. Working
with our alumni has been an enjoyable and
rewarding part of my job. I know our students
appreciate what you do for them, from the annual
Geography Career Day in February to the
distinguished alumni seminar in the fall. I look
forward to working with you in 2011.
As usual, travel took me to quite a few places last
year. It is sad to say that most of the time I just
stayed in the hotel for meetings. San Francisco,
Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong are
the places I got to see quite a bit. It is nice to get to see the other end of the human settlement spectrum once in a while. All the five cities are amazing in their own ways. While in China, I also did some field research on rural migrant labor and presented the initial results at an international human geography conference at the Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou.

The other significant change in my life in the past year? Well, I now have a teenage girl in the house. So I keep hearing something about Justin Bieber and Heidi Montag while trying to listen to my NPR news, which is to a teenage “just so boring.” I guess life will go on.

Richard Marston: Fall 2010 was the beginning of my 31st year as a professor, 6th at K-State. My job is made so much more manageable thanks to the efficient work of Lisa Percival, Accounting Specialist, and Kathy Zimmerman, Senior Administrative Assistant. A professional highlight of summer 2010 was spending two wonderful weeks of field work with two graduate students, Brandon Weihs and Will Butler, in Grand Teton National Park. Besides collecting some interesting data, we spotted bears, moose (one especially close encounter…"Brandon, why don’t you try to get a little closer for a better photo"), elk, bison, plus a pack of 10 wolves along the Snake River…the latter from my raft! Linda was successful competing for a new position in Hale Library as Coordinator of Digital Collections. Her health continues to be good. She and I enjoyed trips to Sedona, Arizona, over Spring Break, plus a trip to London, England, in late summer. A somewhat macab highlight for me on the London trip was entering the Royal Geographical Society Archives and being allowed to hold George Mallory’s boot and inspecting other items recovered from his remains before burial at the foot of Mt. Everest. Our son, Bryce, worked as a hydrologist for the U.S. Forest Service in Saratoga, Wyoming, while also working on his masters’ thesis in Geography (remote sensing of Karakoram range, Pakistan) at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. Our daughter, Brooke, who is majoring in music (oboe performance) at the University of Colorado, was promoted to the Symphony Orchestra. We heard Brooke play in a September concert at CU. She enjoyed working in Chuck Rice’s Soils Lab again last summer. Life is good! Best wishes to you in 2011!

Chuck Martin: Greetings to Geography alumni around the world! Another calendar year is rapidly coming to an end, and with it I guess I can say I have now spent a part of four different decades at Kansas State University! Professionally, I spent three months this summer in central Germany on a research fellowship sponsored by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation examining recent floodplain sedimentation and heavy metal storage along the Dill River. The study sites were close to areas where I have worked in the past, but involved different upstream conditions, including a history of iron mining which released substantial quantities of trace elements to the river over the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Some preliminary results have come back from the lab, and it appears that the Dill River valley has rapidly filled with several feet of river sediment over the past couple of centuries. I look forward to sifting through these and other results in the upcoming months and publishing the findings early next year. Germany was at a fever-pitch from mid-June to mid-July with the national soccer team reaching the semi-finals of the World Cup in South Africa. Life ground to halt everywhere when the national team was playing – stores were empty and streets were vehicle-free as crowds gathered in public viewing areas and local taverns.

I continue to serve as Lead Undergraduate Advisor in the department. It was a good year for the undergraduate program in geography, with the number of majors currently at 120, a record for the half-way point of an academic year. The Geography Senior Capstone class, which had about 6 or 7 students when Jeff Smith and I first taught it 6 years ago, reached a record enrollment of 31 students this fall. In addition to my teaching and research in geography, I remain Director of the
Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences (NRES) Secondary Major at Kansas State. Budget cuts across the university this fiscal year took some of the program’s funding from one college on campus, but fortunately the central administration was able to support us at the same level as previous years.

As was the case last year, the personal news for the year is dominated by growing children and lots of school and sports activities. Christine (now 12) is in the middle of her first year of middle school (7th grade), and loves being able to change classrooms and teachers. She continues to be a soccer nut, both on and off the playing field, and could easily have been Germany’s #1 soccer fan during the World Cup draped in her German national flag and other fan articles. She also has the distinction of being the only member of the family who can get the right sound out of a Vuvuzela. Nicholas, now 16 and nearly 6’ 3” tall, is a junior in high school, which means thoughts are turning to researching colleges for visits this summer. He hopes to go somewhere on the east coast, and still talks of becoming an engineer, preferably in the field of aerospace. He had a disappointing autumn season on the varsity high school soccer team with a leg injury at the start of the year and severely sprained ankle two-thirds of the way through that ended his junior season early. Sabine travels a good deal in her position as Coordinator of the Technical Assistance to Brownfields program at the Hazardous Substances Research Center on campus.

Kendra McLauchlan: Hello, everyone! The year 2010 has been action-packed, as usual. Our son, Micah, started kindergarten, lost his first tooth, and has started to read. Our daughter Isabel is now two years old and she is full of laughter and words. Both kids regularly accompany their parents on field trips to Konza Prairie. We went camping for the first time as a family this year. My 2010 travel revolved around professional meetings in Washington, DC, Laramie, WY, Madison, WI, and Lawrence, KS. The first research projects that I started at K-State are wrapping up, and I am beginning many more! I had two major breakthroughs this year. First, I earned a CAREER grant from the National Science Foundation. CAREER is a program that supports the dual research and teaching missions of promising young faculty members. Only two of these grants were awarded from the Geography and Spatial Science program this year, so I am especially honored and excited to begin this work. The basic idea of the project is to reconstruct nutrient cycling and ecosystem development across a prairie-forest border during the past 10,000 years. The second breakthrough was publishing a manuscript in the journal Nature Geoscience. The lead author is my husband, Joe Craine. We discovered that across many soils in North America, complicated carbon molecules decompose quickly when heated. This finding holds across multiple spatial scales, and it has important implications for climate change. The paper was published in December after five rounds of intense peer-review. My first graduate student, Julie Commerford, successfully completed her thesis in May. She is working in Duluth, Minnesota. Julie was able to make a valuable contribution to understanding how grassland plants produce and transport pollen. This information will be essential for interpreting some of the pollen records from sediment cores on the Great Plains, particularly the droughts and megadroughts that have characterized the region. Great job, Julie!

I continue to use my Paleoenvironmental Lab for research, and this fall for teaching the first Paleoenvironmental Change course ever offered at K-State. The twenty students and I used the lab as a base for tree-ring, soil charcoal, and pollen projects. This was a really fun course to teach, especially the eight field trips I led during the semester.

Bimal Paul: The year 2009 was different from the past couple of years in the sense that Anjali, my wife, was sick for more than eight months. Because of her illness, I was not able to spend long hours for two or three months in my office. However, it did not hamper my academic productivity that much. I was able to publish five papers, including four in refereed journals. Three other papers have been accepted for publications in three refereed journals.
I also wrote three chapters of my forthcoming book on natural hazards and disasters. I submitted two unsuccessful grant proposals and reviewed 22 journal manuscripts in 2010. I am very pleased to report that Sohini Dutt, one of my Ph.D. advisees, successfully defended her dissertation in November. I hope Mitch and Sumo will defend their dissertations sometime in 2011.

Like last two years, I was not able to visit my native Bangladesh in 2010. However, I did visit India through a US Department of Education (DOE) Title VI Grant. We 19 faculty members of K-State visited India for 18 days. We visited Hyderabad, Delhi, Jaipur, and Agra. We established linked with several educational institutions in India. Apart from academic pursuits, personally, the highlight of this trip was to visit the Taj Mahal – one of the world’s most beautiful white marble monuments. I encourage you to visit this outstanding structure. I hope to visit India again in December of this year.

On family front, our eldest daughter Anjana has recently promoted to the one of two Manager positions of US Celluler Manhattan branch. Our younger daughter, Archana is studying nursing at St. Luke Nursing College in Kansas City, MO. Our son Rahul completed one semester at K-State. We closed our daycare in October, 2010 and as a result, Anjali is less busy now.

Jeff Smith: Happy New Year and I hope 2011 is filled with joy, peace, and contentment. I spent most of 2010 writing on some smaller, but enjoyable research projects. I started by revising a document that Matt Cartlidge first worked on. It looks at attachment to place among the retirement-aged population in Greensburg, KS. It has been a fun, but labor intensive project to work on. The other has been a collaborative project with Doug Hurt at the University of Central Oklahoma. We both took trips to Peru in recent years and so we decided to combine our field notes and experiences into one paper which will appear in a forthcoming issue of FOCUS on Geography. On top of that I was fortunate to chair two sessions at the CLAG (Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers) meeting in Bogota, Colombia. Given the turbulent waters that pervade Mexico at the moment, I was unable to return to rural Mexico. I hope things change and stabilize very soon.

In addition to my ongoing research I continue to teach many of the same classes. I had a wonderful group of students in both my GEOG 201 and GEOG 620 during Spring 2010. It always pleases me to see some of my former students stop by my office. As I’ve always said ... if you find yourself on the K-State campus please stop by and say hello!

Selected Faculty Accomplishments

Kevin Blake:
- The second edition of Home Ground: Language for an American Landscape was published in 2010. Kevin Blake was a contributing editor for this book.
- The writer Barry Lopez was named the 2011 Honorary Geographer, and he will be recognized at the Seattle AAG meeting in April. Barry Lopez was co-nominated by Kevin Blake and Will Graf.

Marcellus Caldas:
- Selected as Editorial Member for the Professional Geography, A Journal of the America Association of Geographers
Melinda Daniels:
- Co-authored four publications in *Geomorphology*, *Bioscience*, and *Proceedings of the EWRI/ASCE Congress 2010*
- Received three new grants and contracts
- Successfully recruited four new PhD students to join my research program

Doug Goodin:
- Received funding for two projects, “Impacts of Spatially Heterogeneous Nitrogen to Grazer Distribution and Activity: Effects on Ecosystem Function in Tallgrass Prairie” with Tony Joern, John Briggs, and Adam Skibbe, and “Mapping of Especially Dangerous Pathogens in Ukraine.” (with colleagues from the Southern Research Institute).
- Successful doctoral defense for David Koch

Lisa Harrington:
- Elected to serve as AAG Secretary, 2009-2011.

Shawn Hutchinson:

Max Lu:
- Serving as the president of K-State’s Friends of International Programs.

Richard Marston:
- Completed my 12th year as Co-Editor-in-Chief of the Elsevier journal, *Geomorphology*; have edited 1,033 manuscripts over those 12 years
- Presenting an invited paper at the Annual Meeting of the British Society for Geomorphology held jointly in London with the Royal Geographical Society and Institute of British Geographers.
- Three refereed journal articles published

**Chuck Martin:**
- Paper based on Greg Vandeberg’s Ph.D. dissertation published in the journal *Environmental Earth Sciences* in June 2010
- Three-month research fellowship under the support of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation of Bonn, Germany, at the Geography Institute of Justus Liebig-Universität, Giessen, Germany from May to August 2010
- Promoted to the rank of full professor with the start of the 2010-2011 academic year

**Kendra McLauchlan:**
- Earned a five year CAREER grant from the National Science Foundation (2010-2015) to study long-term ecosystem development.
- Published an article in Nature Geoscience: "Widespread coupling between the rate and temperature sensitivity of organic matter decay."
- Taught the first-ever Paleoenvironmental Change course at Kansas State University.

**Bimal Paul:**
- Appointed the book review editor of *The Professional Geographer*.
- Visited India for 18 days through a US Department of Education (DOE) Title VI Grant.
- Served as an external examiner of a dissertation by School of Environment, Resource and Development, the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Bangkok, Thailand.

**Jeffrey Smith:**
- Article in FOCUS on Geography that looks at emerging tourist destinations in Peru with the hopes of creating more sustainable tourism
- Matthew Cartlidge finished his MA in Geography and has moved on to pursue a Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln
- I participated in two wonderful conferences (CLAG in Bogota, Colombia and OLLAS CUMBRE in Omaha, NE).

**Emeritus News:**

**Chuck Bussing:**
This year we had several visits from a number of former students. It was great to be able to catch up on their families and their various activities as well as to reminisce about the past.
Recently, I was elected to the Friends of Konza Prairie Board and look forward to working more with the organization. I will continue to be a docent, as I enjoy taking students and guests out to view the seasonal changes in the prairie; and when we are lucky, to have a close up look at the bison. Group questions lead to an opportunity for environmental education, and with children to activities such as catching grasshoppers, identifying and then mounting them.

After a lapse of about 30 years since we last played bridge, Sandy and I decided we needed reeducation and joined a beginning bridge group. Our lessons have revealed that we still have some skills but much improvement is needed. A book club, a wine tasting group, department and University lectures, McCain performances, the Beach Art Museum shows, and of course KSU athletics keep us occupied.
On March 19, our son Greg was remarried to a Canadian, and we attended their wedding. We will join his family there for Christmas. We have been watching temperatures there which are often similar to ours but when it gets cold the highs can be minus zero. Brrr!
After the first of the year, we will take a cruise down the west coast of Mexico, through the Panama Canal, to Columbia ending at Fort Lauderdale.

**David Kromm:**
I hope that you had a good year and wish you all the best for 2011. This past year has been a happy one for my family overall, though Bobbie’s sister and her last uncle passed away. We miss them dearly. The highlight of 2010 was celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary.

Our travels began with New England, where we attended one granddaughter’s graduation in suburban Boston and took another granddaughter for several days exploring beautiful Acadia National Park and surroundings in Maine.

In August we celebrated our anniversary with our children and grandchildren in Michigan, enjoying a week-long heritage tour and fun holiday together. Now our family knows where Bobbie and I lived as children and went to school, where we met and dated, and the location of our family graves, hearing interesting stories about each ancestor. Our sons knew some of this, but it was nearly all new to our six grandchildren. They discovered that family history can be fun.

Bobbie and I traveled to the Pacific Northwest in September to celebrate by ourselves. We completed the Lewis and Clark Trail, explored coastal Oregon, walked the gardens in Portland, and drove along old U.S. 30 through the spectacular Columbia River Gorge. We will spend Christmas with our son Chris and his family in North Carolina.

**Huber Self:** "K-State Geography Emeritus Professor Huber Self celebrated his 97th birthday on 24 January 2011.

**Steve Stover:** Early in the year I presented a paper at Wranglers, a discussion group on campus. Most members are retired faculty people. Concerned about the increase and severity of flooding in the world, I titled the paper “It’s the Vegetation, Stupid” in recognition of the lack of long-term planning to preserve Nature’s only means of controlling erosion by wind and water.

Still in process are my “memoirs”, a major focus throughout the year. I have been fortunate to find competent help for that project as, indeed, also for the increasing number of other tasks I can no longer handle myself.

My health continues to be “stable”, a condition aided by regular check-ups by my “team” of professional medical people. Nevertheless, my weight hovers at about 35 pounds below my usual. It’s no wonder that my cloths don’t fit anymore. I’m currently enrolled in a physiotherapy program. I have put bicycling and climbing on the “no, no” list, but I still drive, with extra care. Occasionally I eat out, but most of the time I do very well here with the help of my deep freeze and microwave oven. I enjoy the kitchen and I probably spend too much time there. Also at Easter time I joined grand daughter Dr. Elizabeth and family in Springfield, Mo. I can’t keep names of great grand’s (9 now, I think) in order, but I’m working at it. My list of out-of-town visitors includes two from New Zealand, and one from Germany.

Recreational ready time has slipped this fall, so I’m still in the middle of River Horse by Richard Least-Heat Moon, and similarly in Tony Hillerman’s Talking God.

Daughter Merrily and our friend Martha Seaton continue to have most of the responsibility for the annual “Enid Stover Poetry Recitation Festival.” This year was the fifth; we held it as usual in Manhattan City Park. Merrily makes it a point every year to come for that event, and in April this time I flew home with her to Oroville. That means an excellent opportunity to eat, sleep, write, read and visit. My room, without TV, telephone, radio or committee meetings, always brings a real but brief vacation. Latest visit there came in early October; this time a highlight was spending an hour or so at sundown in a bird sanctuary, a favorite
place for several varieties of ducks as well as a jillion other species of feathered fliers. My son-in-law and his friends will soon be setting up their duck blind. Perhaps a Holiday dinner will benefit. I hope that the word “Peace” dominates the headlines in 2011. Best regards to the geography family….Steve

**Notable Grad Student Achievements**

**William Butler** (MA student in Geography) was awarded a Student Travel Grant from the Binghamton Geomorphology Symposium organizers to enable him to present a poster at the symposium at the University of South Carolina on 16-17 October 2010. The title of Will's poster was “Repeat Photography Documents Short-Term landscape Changes in Geothermal Features, Yellowstone National Park.”

**Ryan Bergstrom** (PhD candidate in Geography) received a travel grant from the Perth College Centre for Mountain Studies to attend the international conference on Global Change in the World's Mountains in Perth, Scotland, 26-30 September. Ryan presented paper titled "Conceptualizing sustainability in two amenity-driven communities of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, North America."

**Rhett Mohler** (Geography doctoral candidate) has been awarded a highly competitive Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement grant from the National Science Foundation Program in Geography and Spatial Sciences. Rhett is the third doctoral student in the young PhD program to receive a NSF-DDRI grant. The award is made to Rhett's doctoral advisor, Dr. Doug Goodin. The title is "Burned Area Mapping in Tallgrass Prairie using In Situ Spectrometry and TM and MODIS Imagery."

**Brandon Weihs** (PhD student in Geography) is co-PI on a successful proposal to the University of Wyoming-National Park Service Research Center to fund research on "Glacial Valley Cross-Profiles and Mass Movement Hazards, Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming."

**Tyra Olstad** (PhD student in Geography) recently published a sole-authored peer reviewed manuscript (Dr. Melinda Daniels)

**The K-State Geography Bowl** team took 3rd place in a competition with 10 teams from universities in the Great Plains-Rocky Mountain Division of the Association of American Geographers. KSU geography graduate student members of the team were Melissa Belz, Will Butler, Jedidiah Riley, Jim Wells, and Steve Walterscheid. K-State undergraduate student, Benjamin Detrixhe, was also on the team.

**K-STATE RESEARCHERS DEVELOPING NEW TOOL TO TRACK BURNING OF TALLGRASS; WORK COULD HELP PREDICT AIR QUALITY DOWNWIND**

MANHATTAN -- When farmers and ranchers burn grassland each spring, it's difficult to track just how much grass is burned and the impact of that smoke. That's why Rhett Mohler, a Kansas State University doctoral student in geography, Wakeeney, is developing a new technique to accurately track the burning of tallgrass prairie in Kansas and Oklahoma. Mohler's project also could enable the modeling of smoke plumes, which could help predict the effects of burning's byproducts downwind.
To map the burned areas Mohler will use data and images from satellite systems -- including the Thematic Mapper and NASA's Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer sensors - and combine that with information he gathers using sensors on the ground. By combining these techniques, he'll develop a set of criteria that can accurately detect what kind of ground cover is in an area, whether it's been burned and how recently. By integrating historical images, Mohler will build a set of maps dating back to 2000.

"What we'll have is a retrospective for each burn that is large enough to detect, information on when it happened, where and how much grass actually got burned," said Douglas Goodin, K-State professor of geography and Mohler's adviser.

The study will contribute to a broader body of knowledge by examining and mapping the burning of tallgrass, which is a less-studied cover type.

Each spring, farmers and ranchers in the Midwest burn their pastures in an effort to clear dead plant material and encourage new growth. But the resulting smoke sometimes raises questions about the trade-offs between air quality and land management.

Some have made the argument that burning in rural areas is responsible for increased air pollution in more urban areas.

"In order to estimate how the effects are going to play out in Wichita, Kansas City, Omaha, Neb., maybe Tulsa, Okla., and even farther, we need to know how much area is burned every year, or at least be able to make an informed estimate," Mohler said. "Mapping the burns is the best way to try and figure that out."

After Mohler's mapping technique is refined, Goodin said they'll look at spikes in air quality data to determine whether spring burns add to pollution in cities.

"This project will look at air quality in certain urban airsheds and see if there is a correlation between burn events and increases in certain air quality indicators," Goodin said.

The technique could provide scientific data critical to building relationships between stakeholders, according to Goodin. "This research will ensure that partnerships are built between researchers, extension personnel and local ranchers," he said. "This relationship will be vital

The technique could if the tallgrass prairie is to be managed based on sound scientific knowledge for the benefit of all involved."

Mohler's research is supported by a National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement grant.
GRANTS TO HELP TWO K-STATE GEOGRAPHY DOCTORAL STUDENT WITH RESEARCH FOR THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL-THEMED DISSERTATIONS

MANHATTAN -- A Kansas State University doctoral candidate in Geography has received a grant to help further research for his dissertations.

Jim Wells, doctoral candidate in geography, Averill Park, N.Y., has received a grant from the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies at Brigham Young University.

Wells will use his $1,500 grant -- with an additional grant of $1,500 possible next year -- toward the completion of his dissertation, "Landscape Change in the American West: A Rephotography of U.S. Highway 89."

"Essentially, I am using a set of 53 photographs from the early 1980s to depict how the West has changed over the past quarter century," Wells said. "Much of my research has been completed, though this money will allow me to tie up all loose ends. I still need to photograph one site at Sunset Crater National Monument in Arizona, as well as visit several sections of road in both Arizona and Utah that I missed during my first pass through the region.

"If I am granted additional funding next year, I intend to use that grant to help in the publication of a book relating to my findings," he said.

After earning his doctorate in 2011, Wells said he is considering two main career paths. "I will definitely be applying to teach geography at the university level, with a focus on the human/cultural side of the discipline. However, because I enjoyed the year I worked with them so much, there is also a chance that I will return to the National Park Service as an interpretive ranger, allowing me to educate people about the world around them."

Wells' major professor is Kevin Blake, professor of geography.

The mission of the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies is to promote the study of the Intermountain West by sponsoring research, publication, teaching and public programs in a variety of academic disciplines including history, geography, sociology, anthropology, politics, economics, literature, art, folklore, range science, forestry, and popular culture.

Graduate Student Profiles

Jeremy Aber: This past year has been a busy one for me, as always. In the spring I taught world regional geography here at K-State, and I proposed my dissertation topic. I also presented at the national AAG meeting in Washington DC.

Over the summer I worked on the department’s computer resources and refined my dissertation research. In the fall I taught cartography just down the road, at Emporia State University. I also presented at the regional AAG meeting in Lawrence, Kansas.

Starting in October, I began to collect data for my dissertation. Using both undergrad and graduate...
students as test subjects, I ran the trials, and I’m now ready to start analyzing the data.

Abdulla Al-Alili:

Salaam everyone; three years ago, I came from Dubai, United Arab Emirates seeking a PhD degree. Nowadays, I’m taking my preliminary exams and I’m planning to go to Dubai next semester for field work (collecting data) for my research. I’m interested in international migration and more specifically in guest workers in the United Arab Emirates. The United Arab Emirates has a unique population composition where guest workers make-up more than eighty percent of the total population. I hope to graduate by the end 2011. I’m really enjoying being a student of K-State and I’m proud being a graduate student at the Geography Department.

Melissa Belz: Hello Alumni! Thanks for taking the time to keep up on the current group of graduate students here at K-State. I am a second year Ph.D. student. My focus is on the cultural landscape, specifically the process of change in vernacular (traditional) dwellings. I spent three weeks this summer in my research area of the Indian Himalaya and will spend several months there next fall completing my fieldwork and interviews. This region (the Kinnaur District of Himachal Pradesh) is known for its woodworking heritage, which plays a large role in the character of the houses. I will study the role of perception, cultural meaning and globalization in the changing landscape.

This year while in Manhattan, I am teaching Human Geography for the first time. This is a challenge in time management, but I enjoy the class. This past summer, I had the opportunity to teach Geography of Tourism. It was a 30 student class which helped to prepare me for this semester’s group of 100. One of the department’s greatest strengths is the teaching opportunity it provides.

At last year’s AAG, I presented a paper on “Urbanization in a Nomadic Society” (Mongolia) and this year will present a poster on my preliminary research in Himalayan vernacular. It looks to be a very busy year as I plan for my proposal and exams this winter. I hope to meet many of you in Seattle.

Ryan Bergstrom: It is hard for me to fathom, but this is my third year as a doctoral student here at K-State. I have recently completed my required course work, and have been focusing my time and energy on teaching Geography of Tourism and acquiring and analyzing data for my dissertation. Field work this past summer consisted of nearly 40 key informant interviews within gateway communities of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Although the grizzly bears were in abundance this past summer, I managed to steer clear and spend nearly 3 months camping and couch surfing in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. With the late arrival of summer (I was snowed on in the Teton Valley as late as July) and an early autumn (snow fell in the Bridger Range the first week in August) outdoor activities including hiking and fishing were limited, but this provided more time to conduct interviews, visit archives and spend a few weeks in Minnesota with my family. Data acquisition and analysis will continue this fall, and a mailed survey will be conducted in the spring of 2011. It is hoped that my dissertation will be defended sometime in the fall of 2011.

I was given a great opportunity to participate in several conferences this past fall that broadened my views of mountain environments, while also giving me numerous networking opportunities. In the process I visited, drove through, or sat in the airport of, two countries and seven states, and logged nearly 12,000 total miles. Highlights included...
hiking in the Highlands of Scotland, where we actually enjoyed two full days of sun (not a regular occurrence this time of year), a trip to Yellowstone National Park just prior to its seasonal closing with the elk rut and fall colors abounding, and a great trip to Fort Worth, Texas during the World Series. I continue to be very grateful for the opportunities our department has provided me thus far, and look forward with anticipation to the coming year as a student and instructor. Go Cats!

**Lynn Brien:** Is a first year doctoral student. Her research interests include remote sensing, land cover change, human-environment interaction, and resource management.

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**William Butler:**
Greetings, all! 2010 has one of the busiest and best years of my life. I received my Bachelor of Science in Physical Geography from Texas State University in May and have just started in the graduate program at KSU this fall as a G.T.A. for all Environmental Geography 2 labs. I have had the privilege of attending and presenting my research of Re-photography of Thermal Features in Yellowstone National Park at many different professional conferences this year--AAG in Washington, D.C., AGC in Fort Worth, and the Binghampton Symposium in Columbia, S.C. I also traveled to Lawrence for the Great Plains-Rocky Mountains Regional AAG Conference as part of the KSU Geobowl team. Additionally, I was able to accompany Dr. Marston and doctoral student Brandon Weihs to Grand Teton National Park on a grant from the University of Wyoming-National Park Service Research Center in July. My focus for our research in the Tetons is to study and map mass movement hazards in five of the most traveled canyons of GTNP. I intend to use our findings as the basis for my thesis (boy, is it great to already have field work out of the way!).

I’m glad to be back in Kansas after spending one year in Lawrence for undergrad. Manhattan is a great place to be, and I’m happy to say that I’ve met a lot of great people so far in the Geography Department! I’m looking forward to the opportunities and challenges that await me in future semesters at KSU.

**Katie Costigan:** I received a MS in Hydrology this past spring from the University of Nevada-Reno, a BS in Natural Resources and a BA in Geography in 2008 from the University of Connecticut, and am now in my first year in the doctorate program working with Melinda Daniels. It’s been a busy year; graduating, conference attendance, moving, my first time teaching, getting reacquainted with humidity, and doing fieldwork. I’m also working on my dissertation proposal that is aimed at looking at the hydraulic, geomorphic, and thermal dynamics at stream confluences. It’s been great so far and I look forward to the next few years I have here.

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**Sohini Dutt:** Namaste. I have been here for 4 years but 2010 has been the most eventful for me both from an academic and a personal point of view. I have been teaching World Regional Geography and have immensely enjoyed my role as a teacher. I have presented papers in both the national and regional AAG conferences in Washington DC and Lawrence, respectively. In 2010, I had one paper, one book chapter and one book review published.

I have also successfully defended my dissertation and thus time has come for me to move on. I have also gotten married this year and am looking forward to a very different phase in my life in the forthcoming year.

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**Rhett Mohler:** I am currently in my final year of the Ph.D. program and hope to graduate in May. I am currently working feverishly on finishing my dissertation. The last year has flown by, but has been a lot of fun. In spring, I took a road trip on the way to the AAG meeting in Washington D.C., visiting Great Smoky Mountain National Park,
Shenandoah National Park, and Mammoth Cave on the way. I am looking forward to another road trip to Seattle for the AAG next spring. Well, I better get back to writing or else I'll never graduate!

Tyra Olstad: Hello again! Not from Manhattan this time, but from the windswept plains and ridges of southwestern Wyoming, where I'm working at Fossil Butte National Monument and continuing to research and write about scientific and artistic perceptions of prairies. I came here last May after taking preliminary exams, presenting my dissertation proposal, and wrapping up a section of World Regional Geography at K-State. Since then, I've climbed around Wyoming, Idaho, and Utah, finally gotten to see southern Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, served as an Artist-in-Residence at Petrified Forest National Park (pastels, photography, and cartography), published an article in Focus, a map in Orion, and a photo-essay in You Are Here, helped design a new Junior Ranger book for the monument, and spent many, many hours perched on the side of a cliff looking for fossil fish. (Now I just have to wrangle all these experiences and impressions into a dissertation, tentatively titled "Zen of the Plains: The Aesthetic of Empty Landscapes.")

Lis Pankl: Greetings! I recently finished my 4th semester in the PhD program and I am excited about the progress I’ve made this past year working with my advisor Kevin Blake (including teaching World Regional for the first time and finalizing my dissertation topic/committee). I keep quite busy as I also work full-time in Hale Library as a Faculty and Graduate Services Librarian. My travels this past year included a trip to Washington DC for the AAG Annual Meeting and a summer vacation with my daughter in South Padre Island, TX.

Sumanth Reddy: Namaste fellow Wildcat geoalumni! 2010 has been a busy year. I am working as an assistant professor of geography at Coppin State University (CSU), a Historically Black University (HBCU) in Baltimore, MD. It is a very rewarding job as I get the unique opportunity to expose inner city youth to the importance and diversity of geography. If everything goes as planned, CSU will become the first urban HBCU to have a geography major.

Besides teaching a full load of geography classes, I have been slowly making progress towards the completion of my PhD. I also published my first manuscript from my PhD research in the Journal of International Tourism and Research. I have also attended two conferences this past year. The 2010 AAG annual meeting in Washington D.C. (my backyard) was especially memorable since I got to see many of my old friends and professors from K-State. I was also the recipient of an NSF/AAG travel grant to attend the IGU Regional Congress in Tel Aviv, Israel. Visiting Israel was the trip of a lifetime. Besides presenting my research on medical tourism and meeting geographers from all over the world, I backpacked throughout Israel, the West Bank and Jordan. Walking through the ancient streets of Jerusalem's old city, I got the feeling that time hasn't changed the landscape much. However, immediately outside the walls of the old city and beyond, it is more than obvious how the contested political landscape has impacted the area. The most memorable locations from my trip are old city Jerusalem, the Security Fence/Apartheid Wall along parts of the West Bank, floating in the Dead Sea at the lowest point on earth, and finally, a trip to the ancient archaeological site of Petra, Jordan.

Jedidiah Riley: Bonjour fellow geographers! This has been my second year at K-State Geography as part of the Master’s program. I’ve made great
strides in writing my thesis and hope to graduate in the spring. Alongside the many hours of research and reading I do in search of the Holy Grail, I mean my degree, I have been working as a GTA for the Environmental Geography 1 lab until Spring 2011 when I will work with labs for GIS I. This fall I also held the position as team leader for the four EG1 GTA’s. That has definitely been a unique experience and has given me great insight and appreciation for all that my teachers and professors have done as I’ve worked in their classrooms as a student.

I have also had the honor of serving as the GTU Beta Psi chapter president. We had a rough start to the year, but are now well off and running. GTU has been helping students with travel grants to non-AAG conferences as we have seen a huge increase in attendance at those events. GTU has been the beneficiary of the generous support of our alumni so I wish to take a moment to thank you on behalf of the entire chapter.

Another aspect of my life has been serving as the secretary for Graduate Student Council. In this position I have had many days where I have had to pinch myself to make sure I was really where I was. We have met with President Schulz and Provost Mason as well as frequently meeting with the Dean of the Graduate School, Dr. Carol Shanklin. From these meetings it is easy to tell that it is an exciting time to be at K-State. There is so much support for all aspects of student life, not to mention raising the bar on graduate students so that K-State becomes a major power in non-medical research in the Midwest. A position on the GSC Executive council has been held by a student from the Geography department for now the second year and likely will in the next academic year, and therefore puts Geography in a unique position to impact the future of K-State.

Claire Ruffing: My first semester as a PhD student is coming to a successful close. In the past year, I finished my Masters degree at the University of Missouri, went on two road trips (one through NM and CO, the other through CO and WY), moved to Manhattan, presented at the AAG regional meeting in Lawrence, helped with the bison roundup at Konza, and am now narrowing down on my dissertation topic. I am working under Dr. Melinda Daniels to explore my research interests: the relationship between fluvial geomorphology and controls on ecosystem metabolism. Time really flies when you are having so much fun! In the next year I am looking forward to getting started on my research, attending the AAG national meeting in Seattle and taking a cake decorating class. But first, I have to make a quick stop back home in Baltimore for the holidays…

Roy Sando: Hi everyone! Well, my time in Kansas has finally come to an end, as this will be my last semester in residency at K-State. This is my 4th semester as a graduate student, and I have about half of my thesis written with a plan to defend it in the Spring of 2011. My time here at Kansas State has been a great chance to learn and mature. When I first came here, it was obvious to me that I was on my way to writing a Nobel prize-winning thesis. Now, I realize that I…am a graduate student…on my way to publishing papers and racking my brain over research grants. Overall, it has been a great experience here and I cannot thank my elders and colleagues in Seaton enough for all they have done, especially those with whom I have worked with in the Remote Sensing Lab. Now it is off to Montana to finish a project with the USGS.

Travis Smith: In 2010 I was blessed to have enrolled in and experienced two outstanding courses in our department that ultimately rank in my top 5 favorite classes of all-time. Being a one-course-a-semester student (due to work and family obligations) has allowed me to devote more time and attention to the necessities of each course, and I must say that for both classes it was truly an edifying experience that proved beneficial well beyond simply fulfilling a degree requirement.
In the spring semester I enrolled in Jeff Smith’s Mexico, Central American and the Caribbean class. The course provided extensive and up-to-date content on the region, including an acute assessment of the US/Mexico Illegal Immigration (labor) issue to the fascinating La Vida Loca Day (particularly the peculiar treat – corn ice cream). More importantly, the course relaxed and debunked some cultural stereotypes that had been forged in my mind via previous experiences. As a result, it strengthened my relationship with my Criollo best friend while also teaching me the (less important) technical difference between a poncho and a serape. I want to thank Jeff for tolerating me, and for all the hours and effort he infused into all 45 class periods to make this educational event so intellectually lucrative.

In the fall semester I enrolled in Kevin Blake’s Perceptions of the Environment class. The information we covered in my penultimate graduate course left me feeling like I’d discovered a new color in the color spectrum. It was exhilarating to walk out of class each week and engage the campus with a different perception. From Meinig’s 10Versions to our three eclectic and insightful primary texts to the ten Big Ideas (especially #9) to my introduction to the meltdown at Three Mile Island to our historically revealing campus and Konza Prairie field walks to, most significantly for me, the five environmental ethics, each week the seminar provided me with fascinating learning moments (everyday do three things) and astute witticisms: “It wasn’t a miracle, it was migration”. I want to thank Kevin for his creative, thought provoking assignments, rousing presentations and for our educationally stimulating seminar and post-seminar discussions.

Lisa K. Tabor: This year has been fantastic! I have completed my course, worked as both a research assistant and teaching assistant, and defended my thesis in December. I have had a great time working with the Kansas Geographic Alliance and helping with the Geographic Bee, summer workshops, strategic planning, and GeoLiteracy day at the state fair. I will complete one final semester here at KSU, spring 2011, wrapping up my work with Dr. John Harrington before I take the next step in my geography career. Cheers to another great year.

Chuyuan (Carter) Wang: I’m a first-year Master’s candidate. It’s all new to me. I have to say, for every international student, it is really a difficult transition from their home countries’ traditional culture to the multicultural society here in the U.S. You have to surmount the language barrier and differences in the way of communication. You have to adapt yourself to a totally different life style, teaching environment, and teaching methods. Fortunately, I made it, within this semester. I’m so lucky and happy to be here with all the helpful and enthusiastic geographers. I do enjoy my life in this new home.

The year of 2010 is not only a milestone, but also a new start in my life. I am going to start from here in the Department of Geography at K-State to achieve a higher goal in my academic life. There are so many things that I need to learn and to consult in the future. I’m still young so I have enough time to realize my dream. Merry Christmas and happy new year to all of you! 2011 is waving at us!

Brandon Weihs: This second year at Kansas State has been exciting and busy. I am currently instructing Cartography and Thematic Mapping, which is now for the second semester, and I am looking forward to teaching it again this spring. This year has been particularly fruitful for me in terms of research. In the spring, I (co-principle investigator with Dr. Marston) received a small grant from the University of Wyoming / National Parks Service ($5,000) for research that was then conducted during July in Grand Teton National Park. The fieldwork went very well, and we are currently performing analyses that should be ready for dissemination in early spring of 2011.
Other accomplishments for this year include receiving the Rumsey Bissell Marston scholarship for physical geography ($500), two publications in the journals Zeitschrift fur Geomorphologie and Geografiska Annaler, two publications with positive reviews for publishing in the Journal of Chemistry and Physics of the Earth, as well as attending several professional meetings such as the AAG in Washington D.C. and the GPRM AAG in Lawrence, KS. I’m looking forward to the next year, which will begin with research involving new study sites to add to my dissertation topic “Cross-Valley Profiles of Deglaciated Canyons”.

James Wells: Hi all! I am in my 4th year here at K-State’s Department of Geography. My dissertation detailing landscape change along a cross section of the American West is now more than half done, and I am on course to graduate within a year. My greatest accomplishment this past semester, however, has not been in regards to academics. In early September, I climbed Mount Kilimanjaro: the highest point in Africa (19,341 feet above sea level) and my first of the seven summits. I ascended by the 6-day Marangu Route, and I can say that it is easily the most difficult thing I have ever done. I managed to take over 200 photographs of the adventure, and in addition to a departmental brown bag, I have guest lectured about my experience in both Geography and English Language Program classes.

I’ve included one of these photos here: a picture of my climbing partner (Justin Bergin, from Saratoga, NY) and I standing on the summit. We are now talking about tackling Europe’s Mount Elbrus (elevation 18,510 ft.) or South America’s Aconcagua (22,841) next.
Geography Colloquia for 2010

Department of Geography and Gamma Theta Upsilon

Thursday, 11 February, 12:00 noon, Ackert Hall, Room 324: Dr. James Sherow “Environmental History of the Chisholm Trail,”

Friday, 19 February, 3:30 pm, Big 12 Room, K-State Union: Dr. Katie Algeo “Mammoth Dreams: Construing and Constructing Place at the World’s Largest Cave”

Tuesday, 2 March, 1:30 pm, K-State Big 12 Room: Dr. Charles Rice "Soil Microbes: The Bad, The Good, and The Ugly”

Friday, 26 March, 3:30 pm, K-State Big 12 Room: Dr. John Agnew “Waterpower: Politics and the Geography of Water Provision”

Thursday, 8 April, 4:00 pm, Flint Hills Room in K-State Student Union: Dr. Fausto Sarmiento “Andean Identity Revisited: How Mountain Political Ecology Generates Narratives for Highland Landscape Conservation”

Thursday, 29 April, 2:30 pm, Big 12 Room (K-State Union): Dr. Wes Jackson “The Necessity and Possibility of an Agriculture Where Nature is the Measure”

Friday, 17 September, 3:30 pm, Big 12 Room (K-State Union): Dr. Michael Urban “The Age of Us: Recoupling Biophysical and Human Systems”

Friday, 29 October, 3:30 pm, 132 Seaton Hall: Sheeley J.T. “Breach Inundation Mapping for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Dams,”

Friday, 12 November, 2:30 pm, Cottonwood Room in the K-State Student Union: Dr. Robert Walker “Biofuels and the Green Energy of Amazonia”

KSU GEOGRAPHY ON FACEBOOK

Facebook page for Kansas State University Department of Geography
http://www.facebook.com/pages/Kansas-State-University-Department-of-Geography/182670895081339

Currently the page is setup to only accept input (e.g., status updates, photos, videos, calendar events, etc.) from designated administrators. Right now, those administrators are the faculty who have a Facebook page and who expressed and interest in posting on the site.

GISSAL also has an active page on Facebook, the popular social networking site. This global site (http://ksu.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2204578931) is designed for GISSAL student staff, affiliated scientists, and alumni to keep abreast of current laboratory events, keep in touch with friends, and advertise employment opportunities. Please join our small, but growing, group of K-State GIScientists! (http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/group.php?gid=32339496987).

There’s also a page for the St. George Geographical Society dedicated to the illustrious members of this exclusive group – which you can’t buy your way into… Find it at:
http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=10645500398
Huber Self Geography Scholarship: Courtney Estes
The Self Scholarship was established in 1981 and honors Dr. Huber Self who retired in 1980 after devoting more than 33 years of his professional life to the advancement of geography at Kansas State University. The scholarship is supported by Dr. Self, alumni, and friends of the Department of Geography. It is presented to an outstanding undergraduate geography major.

H.L. "Sy" Seyler Undergraduate GIScience Scholarship: Elizabeth Uthoff
The Seyler Scholarship was established in 2006 and honors Dr. H.L. "Sy" Seyler who retired in 2000 after devoting nearly three decades of professional service to the advancement of both geography and geographic information science at Kansas State University. The scholarship is supported by alumni and friends of the Department of Geography.

William D. Grimm Memorial Scholarship: Aleks Spangler
The Grimm Scholarship was established in 1992 and honors William, a 1986 K-State Geography graduate who was killed in the Persian Gulf War on 31 January 1991. The scholarship is supported by the Grimm family, alumni, and friends of the Department of Geography. It is presented to an outstanding undergraduate geography major.

LeBlanc Outstanding Undergraduate Major Award: Christopher Calkins
The LeBlanc Award was established in 1977 and is made possible through the generosity of Leonard LeBlanc III, who earned a B.S. in Geography in 1973. It is presented to an outstanding undergraduate geography student.

National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE)/Association of American Geographers Award for Excellence of Scholarship: Jason Collett
The NCGE/AAG Award was established in 1979 is presented to the graduating senior in K-State Geography with the highest grade point average. The cash award is supported by the Department of Geography.

White Geography Graduate Teaching Assistant Excellence Award: James Wells
The White Award was established in 1989 and is presented to the K-State Geography graduate student selected for outstanding performance as a teaching assistant. The White Award is made possible through the generosity of Steve and Sue White.

Rumsey B. Marston Scholarship: Kabita Ghimire & Brandon Weihs
The R.B. Marston Scholarship was established in 1986 and honors the memory of Rumsey Bissell Marston, and is supported by the Marston family, alumni, and friends of the Department of Geography. The scholarship is presented to a graduate student who writes a thesis or dissertation proposal in physical geography that involves a significant level of well-conceived fieldwork.

Graduate Student Leadership Award: Ryan Bergstrom & Tyra Olstad
The Leadership Award was established in 2002 to recognize K-State Geography graduate students for their professionalism, dedication, and leadership. The Leadership Award is supported by alumni and friends of the Department of Geography.

Mary Dobbs Outstanding Citizenship Award: Rhett Mohler & Melissa Belz
The Mary Dobbs Award was established in 2006 to honor the memory of Mary, a K-State Geography doctoral student who passed away in Fall 2006 and was awarded the Ph.D. posthumously. The Dobbs Award is presented to geography students who best exemplify the spirit of the department and a willingness to give "110 percent." The Dobbs Award is supported by alumni and friends of the Department of Geography. K-State students have now earned 20 Udall scholarships. K-State is third among state universities in Udall scholarship competition. Only the University of Montana with 31 and Arizona State University with 21 have had more Udall winners since the competition began in 1996.
Department Graduates:

Congratulations and best wishes!

Spring 2010

Doctor of Philosophy
Vicki Tinon-Brock

Master of Arts
Matthew Cartlidge
Julie Commerford
Rex M. Robichaux

Bachelor of Arts
Richard Raymond Shurtz III
Donald Richard Tomlinson

Bachelor of Science
Nathan M. Brenner
Jason M. Collett
Taenecia Marie Gaines-Bey
Matthew A. Hosey
Jared E. Martin
Nathaniel R. Myers
Terrence T. O’Connor III
Austin R. Vandorn
Erica Lynn Volker
Peter J. Young
Benjamin M. Zimmerman
Grant T. Zoller

Fall 2010

Doctor of Philosophy
David E. Koch

Bachelor of Arts
Adam C. Ashmore
Maria A. Pezza
Scott E. Schlageck

Bachelor of Science
Shane A. Busenitz
Stephanie J. Edmonds
Scott C. Kitch
Brian D. Nechols
Ruthie N. Nguyen
Brian W. Rader
Christina M. Turner
Tavis C. Whitham
Our First 20 PhD Graduates

Jacob Sowers 2010, Department of Geography, Geology & Planning, Missouri State University
David Koch 2010, Dubuque University
Vicki Tinnon 2010, Department of Geography, University of Alabama
Ramatoulaye Ndiaye 2009, Senegal
Erik Bowles 2009, Federal Aviation Administration
Chris Laingen 2009, Eastern Illinois University
John Harty 2007, Visiting Assistant Professor, University of Wyoming
Jincheng Gao 2006, KSU Division of Biology
John Jacobs 2005, location unknown
Johnny Coomansingh 2005, Div. of Social Science, Minot State University
Gregory Vandenberg 2005, Department of Geog., University of North Dakota
Holly Barcus 2001, Department of Geography, Macalester College
James Davis 2001, Department of Geology/Geography, Eastern Illinois University
Sujata Dunn 2001, Asst. Director, SW Kansas Library System
Jason Holcomb 2001, Department of Geog., Govt & Hist., Morehead State University
Nancy Leathers 2001, USDA Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service
Luke Marzen 2001, Department of Geography, Auburn University
Shawn Hutchinson 2000, K-State Geography
Brad Rundquist 2000, Department of Geog., University of North Dakota
Thomas Schafer 2000, Department of Geosciences, Fort Hayes State University

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2011 Geography Career Day will be Tuesday, February 8

Geography Career Day is held the same day as the engineering career fair each spring semester. The goals are to give KSU Geography students an opportunity to develop resume writing and interview skills, and to help students seeking internships or full time jobs to connect with employers. Let me know if you would like for your firm to be added to the list of potential employers. I will begin emailing details to employers in early January.

GTU will post interview sign up sheets and provide further information to students in January.
List of Contributors

The Geography Department Fund, William D. Grimm Memorial Scholarship, Huber Self Geography Scholarship, Rumsey Bissell Marston Scholarship, and the White Geography GTA Excellence Award (July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010).

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(Over $10,000)
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MISSOURI RIVER DONORS
(Over $1,000)
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Raymond McDonald and Kay Weller

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Pam Scanlon and Thomas Nesmith
Susan and Stephen White

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Doran and Kathy Strouse
Molly Theobald
Gregory Vandeberg and Lara Dando
Nicole Wayant
Marla and Lynn Webster
Eric and Amy Weisbender
James and Diane Wells
K-State Geography Does Well in National Rankings

In September 2010, the National Research Council finally released their survey of doctoral programs in all disciplines around the country. The NRC Assessment used data from 2005-06 so the report is already out-of-date. The NRC Assessment was released in the form of spreadsheets with data about our program’s S (survey-based) rankings and the program’s R (Regression-based) rankings compared to others around the country. According to NRC, “the S-rankings reflect the degree to which a graduate program is strong in the characteristics that faculty in the field rated as most important to the overall program quality”. The R-rankings “are based on an indirect approach to determining what faculty value in a program.” Please note that the S and R rankings are presented as ranges. Information about the two rankings for each program and the 20 characteristics that served as the basis for the rankings included in the assessment is presented in the attached four page summary and a list of frequently asked questions.

The 20 characteristics for which Ph.D. programs were assessed are listed below:

- Publications per Allocated faculty
- Cites per Publication
- % Faculty with Grants
- % Faculty Interdisciplinary
- % Non-Asian Minority faculty
- % Female faculty
- Awards per Allocated Faculty
- Average GRE of Doctoral Students
- % First-Year Students with Full Support
- % First-Year Students with External Funding
- % Non-Asian Minority Students
- % Female Students
- % International Students
- Average PhDs 2002 to 2006
- % PhD Students Completing within 6 Years
- Time to Degree Full and Part Time
- % Students in Academic Positions
- Student Work Space
- Health Insurance
- Number of Student Activities Offered

The complete assessment report and methodology are available at the following website: www.nap.edu/rdp

K-State Geography was compared to 48 other doctoral level programs in Geography in the USA. A total of 75 Ph.D. programs in Geography are offering in the United States, so 27 doctoral programs in Geography chose not to participate. K-State Geography, one of the youngest Ph.D. programs in the NRC Assessment is ranked 25th in the R-ranking and 10th in the S-ranking. We are ranked 12th in terms of research and #1 to #3 in Student Support! Because the NRC report used data from 5 years ago, we would rank even higher now because of the productive faculty and outstanding doctoral students who have been added to our program since 2005-06.

“Student Activities” in the NRC ranking include:

- orientation for new graduate students
- international student orientation
- language screening/support prior to teaching
- instruction in writing
- instruction in statistics
- prizes/awards for teaching or research
- assistance/training in proposal writing
• on-campus graduate research conferences
• formal training in academic integrity
• active graduate student association
• staff assigned to graduate student association
• financial support provided to graduate student association
• posted academic grievance procedure
• dispute resolution procedure in-place
• regular graduate program directors meetings
• annual review of all enrolled doctoral students
• organized training to help students improve teaching skills
• travel support to attend professional meetings

Alumni News

Patrick Abbot: Hello Fellow Wildcats!
I have had an eventful year. The biggest thing in 2010 was my geography-influenced wedding in Buffalo, New York. The key to everything was the food. Instead of the standard dry chicken that no one likes we had buffalo wings (native to the region), roast beef sandwiches on weck bread (German-American food from the region), Polish sausages (Buffalo has the second largest Polish-American community in the country), and locally made ice cream.

Right now the Abbott family is across the world. My wife is working with a development NGO in western Kenya. She is having a blast working with children and is becoming quite good at cricket. Meanwhile, I am walking around the Pashtun Belt of Afghanistan doing geography there.

In 2011 we will be reunited and finally be able to enjoy some baseball games (and I’ll be able to experience warm weather again).

Bryan Boutz: Graduate Certificate G.I.Science, 2010, is employed as a GIS Developer for Bartlett & West in Topeka, KS.

Julie Commerford: Hello! Well, I finished my master’s degree last May, and moved back to Minnesota where I took a job as a GIS Specialist at Barr Engineering Company in Duluth, Minnesota. I am now the second GIS Specialist in Barr’s Duluth Office. Since joining the company, I’ve gotten to work on the mapping and spatial analytical aspects of a very large variety of projects—from wetland delineation to superfund remediation projects. I’m still learning new things each day, and (trying) to adjust to the colder climate again. I’m enjoying living directly adjacent to Lake Superior, and am taking a couple of community education classes. I’ve made a couple of trips back to Kansas though, and have another one planned next month, so I will see some of you in the near future!

Johnny Coomansingh, (PhD 2005)
First let me give you a synopsis of where I am in the grand scheme of things. I am still at Minot State University, North Dakota. At the moment it is about 7.9 degrees F outside with an abundance of the white stuff…and more of it is in the forecast. Last November I submitted my packet for tenure and promotion. Wish me luck. My younger son Jessel [KState grad] is studying to be a physician assistant at Salus University, Philadelphia. Wannabe K-State grad Josh, my older son is employed with the Ministry of Education in Trinidad as a computer analyst or something of that nature. He is also the lead guitarist in the rock band Cabezon (look up Cabezon on the WWW).

My most interesting experience I had for last year (Christmas) was meeting face to face with my 16-year old sweetheart in Toronto. We did not see each
other for a whopping 40 years, and lo and behold, Facebook! We were both born on the same day, month and year. I will keep you all posted on further developments. I sense your curiosity. Apart from the wonderful moments we shared visiting the Niagara Falls, a geologic wonder. The commodification of this place is astounding. I caroused with some of my Trini paranderos (cuatro playing, singing men) in the parranda (parang) on Christmas Eve night. Singing the parang (Spanish Christmas carols) and playing my cuatro (four stringed instrument bigger than the ukulele) brought the peace of Christmas to my soul. With its Trini eateries and West Indian markets, Ajax, Ontario felt like Trinidad! So much for that type of geography.

**Patty Drews:** (B.S., 1974) I am an Associate Professor of Geography at Northwest Missouri State University and also serve as the graduate program director for Northwest’s online M.S. and graduate certificate programs in GIScience. My research took a new direction last year as I collaborated with a colleague in the English Department at Northwest to use GIS to examine the geographic origins of northern dialect forms in Chaucer’s “The Reeve’s Tale.” This work resulted in a presentation at The Medieval Translator conference in Padova, Italy in July 2010, coupled with side trips to Florence and Venice.

**Matt Cartlidge:** Hello Fellow Wildcats! 2010 flew by and brought with it a number of blessings and changes. Stacia completed her first year of teaching at Manhattan High School. She taught Spanish 1 & 2 to 9th graders. While Stacia was bringing home the bacon, I successfully completed my Masters Degree in Geography at Kansas State University (GO CATS!).

With our future plans uncertain, we relied on our faith to lead us to where we were meant to be. Unbeknownst to us, it was at the epicenter of HUSKER COUNTRY! Without a stitch of Wildcat Purple in sight, Stacia and I arrived to Lincoln, NE, in early June. Stacia was blessed with a job teaching Spanish to 6th and 8th graders at Scott Middle School in Lincoln, while I began my Ph.D. in Geography at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln working under Dr. David Wishart. We have transitioned well, made good friends with a couple who lives nearby, and stayed loyal to supporting Kansas athletics, as long as they wear purple, of course. However, we may sport some red next year, because Nebraska will no longer compete in the Big 12 against K-State. Naturally, we would love to be closer to our beloved friends and Wildcat family in Manhattan, but overall, we enjoy our new adventure in Nebraska. GO STATE!!!

**John Patrick Hardy:** Greetings from the High Plains! I’m now entering my third year at the University of Wyoming and am enjoying the experience. I am happy to announce that I was offered (and accepted) an extended contract this past spring meaning I’ll be here for the foreseeable future.

My research on Paul Bunyan and his blue ox continues to evolve. This past summer I made a trip to the West Coast and several trips to Canada in search of the folk giants. This coming summer I have another trip planned to Maine and New Brunswick as I wrap up this project—findings I hope to eventually publish in a book I am working on.

In addition to my ongoing research on Paul Bunyan, I’ve been busy developing new courses here at Wyoming - 8 different courses over the past 2 years. Most of these courses are directly related to my research interests, which have made them a pleasure to teach. Courses I’ve taught include Experience of Place, Images of Wyoming & the West, The American Landscape, Cultural Geography, and Contested Landscapes, to name a few. Although I miss K-State athletics, Laramie is good fit for me and I’m happy to be a part of the department. Go ‘Cats!
Jason Holcomb: My biggest news is that my wife Heather and I just moved into a nice house within a ten minute walk from the Morehead State University campus. We also recently celebrated our second wedding anniversary. I married into a house in Iowa, so we spent most of the first half of 2010 in Iowa while I was on sabbatical. Iowa was our base of operations for several trips to five different Great Plains states for oral history projects with custom harvesters, a project that began two years prior with retired harvesters in the Sterling and Inman, KS area. I had two grants, one from the Kansas Humanities Council, to pay for travel and transcription, and it was a very rewarding project. When all the transcripts are edited I will donate them and the audio files to the archives at Hale Library at KSU! The Kansas Humanities Council grant was sponsored by the Mennonite Heritage & Agricultural Museum in Goessel, and I hope to continue working with people in the community on related projects. I am working on two manuscripts related to international labor in custom harvesting, which I learned more about while doing the oral history interviews. And finally, I still miss Kansas and the Flint Hills!

Steve Kale (BA Geography, 1970; BS Business Administration, 1970) is retired from the State of Oregon and is principal of SR Kale Consulting LLC, Salem, Oregon, where he specializes in freight, intermodal, and socioeconomic planning, research, and analysis. In April 2010, after attending the Association of American Geographers’ annual meeting, he traveled to North Carolina and South Carolina, the last two U.S. states he had not yet visited. In July 2010, he attended a meeting of International Geographical Union’s Commission on Marginalization, Globalization, and Regional and Local Responses in Graz, Austria, and Fribourg, Switzerland. The meeting included a three-day field trip through the Alps. Afterwards he traveled to Finland where he joined a Finnish geographer for a four-day field trip north of the Arctic Circle in Finland, Norway, and Sweden. He continues to participate in activities of the Transportation Research Board and is a member of the K-State Geography Alumni Board.

Chris Laingen (PhD 2009); 2010 finds me in my second year of teaching at Eastern Illinois University. Things have started to settle down a bit from last year. My wife and I are both enjoying our new jobs at EIU, the major remodeling of our house is done, and we’re now able to enjoy other aspects of life a bit more.

In May my wife and I traveled to Europe and enjoyed 2 weeks in Switzerland (hiking), Germany (sampling beer), Austria (sampling more beer), and Italy (sampling wine and relaxing). It was a nice break with no email or cell phone connection! Five years ago I was able to visit the farm in Norway where my family came from, and on this trip we visited the village in Switzerland where my wife’s family came from. Both of us wondered why our families left such beautiful places for Minnesota and Ohio.

Teaching and working with students at EIU has been very rewarding. During the Fall 2010 semester I was awarded a grant that allowed me to employ three students to work with me doing land
cover change interpretation for the USGS Land Cover Trends Project. This past summer, another grant allowed a colleague and I to traverse the Corn Belt. Our plans are to make a one-hour documentary film describing how Corn Belt agriculture has changed over the past few decades. Along the way we interviewed farmers, nearly got stuck on a wet, dirt road in western Kansas, visited the famous South Dakota Corn Palace, captured nearly ten hours of video footage, and ascended the treacherous south face of Mt. Sunflower.

Best wishes to all. I look forward to seeing everyone in Seattle!

Ben Meade: Greetings fellow Wildcat Geographers!! I hope this message finds everybody well and having a safe and enjoyable 2011! It is always interesting to look at the past year and recollect the major occurrences that come to mind. For me, the past year was very, very busy! I am living in Boston and am enjoying all that the city has to offer. It is a fun place! My job at ERM as an environmental consultant/geologist continues to go well. Luckily, the work is constantly changing as new projects seem to constantly come in the door!

While I am becoming acclimated to city life, outdoor interests frequently have me venturing into Boston's hinterlands. This past summer found me in all of the mountain ranges from the Adirondacks in New York through the mountains of northern New England. I hiked almost every weekend this summer and I am planning to continue that trend in coming years! The adjacent picture finds me at Lake Tear of the Clouds, the source of the Hudson River in New York's Adirondacks. My travels have been mostly within the Northeast region this year; however I did make it out to Kansas for a great weekend visit in September. The fall brought excellent fly fishing and the ski season is now in full swing, although we could use some more snow! Late this coming summer, I have a vacation lined up for the Yellowstone region of Wyoming (to pursue beautiful scenery and big trout) and I am planning to return to K-State for a weekend as well this fall. My best to everyone in the new year, and feel free to drop me a line if anyone is in the New England region! Cheers; Ben

Ramatoulaye Ndiaye: After my graduation on December 2009 at K-State, I spent three month in San Francisco visiting the west coast, specifically California where I have friends and family. I came back to Senegal on March 2010 where I am living right now with my family In Dakar. I started working with USAID as a junior consultant on May for their Global Food Security Program Response (GFSPR) initiative in Senegal, presently being called “Feed the Future initiative”. I was working in that project as a climate change specialist and soil resource manager with a multidisciplinary team in order to prepare a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA). Since December 2010 I am teaching a master degree in environment at Dakar University at the Environmental Science Institute (Institut des sciences de l’environement, ISE). I have been nominated to be part of another USAID project coming up mid January. I will do with colleagues from Washington a retrospective study of 30 years of USAID support to the forestry, natural resources and environment sector in Senegal. I miss Manhattan and people at K-State geography department but I do not miss the cold weather storms.

Judd Patterson: I continue to work as a GIS Specialist for the National Park Service in Miami, FL, where my office conducts research in 7 parks from south Florida to the U.S. Virgin Islands. This past year we were kept busy with both a National Geographic BioBlitz event in Biscayne National Park and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill response in Everglades and Dry
Tortugas National Parks. The Loop Current behaved and thankfully neither park suffered direct impacts from surface oil.

I continue to pursue nature photography during my time off, and was able to undertake some amazing travel in 2010. Highlights included the northernmost point in the United States (Point Barrow, AK) as well as Trinidad, Puerto Rico, and Ecuador. Hiking to over 14,500 feet in the humid Andean paramo was a big thrill. Best to all in 2011!

Rorik Peterson: Greetings fellow K-State geographers! I hope everyone had a prosperous and enjoyable 2010, and that all is looking positive in 2011. I continue to develop wind projects for Horizon Wind Energy, and am currently working on approximately 1,500 megawatts of wind projects across the state of Kansas. Major work-related accomplishments include the rapid advancement and initiation of construction activities at our wind project in Coffey County. After living in Lawrence and commuting for the past two and a half years, my partner, Alex, and I finally made the move to Overland Park in December. My daily roundtrip commute has shrunk from 80 miles to 8 miles – something I greatly appreciate. I spend enough time on the road around Kansas, anyway! I also had the pleasure to take a couple vacations in the past year. I enjoyed a few days in NYC right before Christmas of 2009. In the summer of 2010, we took a weeklong road trip to New Mexico; we enjoyed everything from alien-infested Roswell, to a nice long hike through Carlsbad Caverns, to great food and culture in Santa Fe. Best wishes everyone, and here’s to a prosperous (and windy) 2011!

John Roberts: (BS 1973; MA 1975) I continue to use a great KSU geography education in my daily work, where I design, build and manage nature preserves in the 54,000-acre Natomas Basin of Northern California. My early interest in Northern California stems from a particularly passionate and interesting lecture presented back in the early ’70s by then-department head William Siddall. In that lecture, Siddall described in some detail a flight he had taken over the area, during which he noted the extraordinary geography of the region. (For a more recent and lengthy take on Northern California’s physical geography, read John McPhee’s best seller, “Assembling California.”)

Of the Geography Department’s “S” professors at the time, it was Siddall, Stover and Self who imbued in me a sense of the beauty of geography, and how knowledge of it enriched life, at least if you knew what to look for and how to look for it. Other Geography Department “S” professors, Seyler and Stacey, helped me understand how geography and economics are linked, and made the subject immensely compelling. This guidance and instruction in the geography of business and commerce has been very helpful in fulfilling my work as a member of the Board of Directors of a publicly-traded telecommunications firm, SureWest Communications (NASDAQ: SURW). (I call this my “second” job.)

Professors Bussing and Kromm’s memorable lectures, among other things, convinced me that travelling the world with family was eye-opening and fascinating, and that gift I was able to confer to my daughters. The downside to getting inoculated with the wonder of travel is that my children now live a continent or two away, but do so confidently and knowledgeably, owing to my KSU Geography Department education, important elements of which I subsequently shared with each of them.

While I still travel, my favorite destination is Manhattan, Kansas, where I get to see my parents, siblings and old friends. Each trip includes a stroll through the Geography Department in Seaton Hall, a highlight of these visits home. While I miss the former headquarters in Thompson Hall, today’s Geography Department co-location with Landscape Architecture and Architecture in Seaton Hall is a bona fide plus. (For Department Head Marston: quote Churchill as follows; “Never, never, never, never give up!” that space. Okay, I added the words, “that space.”)
The KSU Geography Department has done very well, and we should all be very proud of it.

Patricia Ann (Bennett) Solís, PhD
psolis@aag.org (M.A. @ KSU 1996)

I continue my work at the Association of American Geographers, starting my 9th year there now, currently as Director of Outreach and Strategic Initiatives. I am still living with my husband and two little boys for much of the year in Panama City, Panama, which is an adventure that enriches my career as much as it does my personal life. This year at the AAG, I led and participated in many new projects and programs, including these highlights:

Institute for Integration of Research on Climate Change and Hazards in the Americas, AAG with PAIGH (OAS), USGS, National Communication Association (NCA), and UNEP-LAC; co-organized a two-week long workshop in Panama with interdisciplinary team of 50 including expert instructor-mentors at the advanced graduate and post-doctoral level students from 12 countries, funded by the National Science Foundation PanAmerican Advanced Studies Institute (PASI). We published white papers and a research agenda that has been well received and is expected to provide the basis for a number of new initiatives. I also gained some interesting new experiences talking to the press (see photo) and gave my first radio and newspaper interviews in Spanish.

Departments and Underrepresented Students ALIGNED: Addressing Locally-tailored Information Infrastructure & Geoscience Needs for Enhancing Diversity; a three-year proof-of-concept pilot national program centered on support to departments, combining a spatial information system and an online clearinghouse of materials for increasing the participation of members of underrepresented groups in geography/geosciences, with knowledge and best practices, funded by National Science Foundation Opportunities for Enhancing Diversity in the Geosciences Program.

Continued participation on the AAG Team conducting the EDGE project, having wrapped up a first phase focused on enhancing graduate education in geography towards academic careers to begin this year with its second phase: Beyond the Ivory Tower: Researching and Improving Geography Graduate Education for STEM Careers in Business, Government, and Non-profit Organizations. The project is funded by National Science Foundation Research and Evaluation on Education in Science and Engineering (RESEE), (Michael Solem, PI).

MyCOE Geographic Learning for Biodiversity Initiative in Africa, supporting teams of university students and faculty/local mentors in community-based research projects and capacity building in 9 countries; with funding from NASA and in collaboration with USAID, SERVIR, RCMRD, EIS-Africa, ESRI, and others; and with support from NSF Office of International Science & Engineering (OISE) to integrate US participation in three select sites.

Besides these and other externally funded projects, I also continue to liaison with the AAG Council, Committees, and Specialty Groups, and work with the Developing Regions Membership Program, all of which give me the joy of collaborating with many geographers from around the country and around the world.

Other than my AAG work, in 2010, I was also officially appointed to be the US Geography National Representative to the PanAmerican Institute for Geography and History of the Organization of American States (OAS). I traveled to Lima, Peru for the meetings and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. From there, I accompanied my husband Dr. Dario Solís to Vancouver, Canada where he received the ASME’s inaugural International Mentoring and Advising Medal for his achievements in supporting research and educational capacity in Panama.

This year, it was also fun to help organize the K-State Alumni Reception at the AAG Annual Meeting in Washington, DC, where it was a pleasure to see many old friends and new friendly faces. I can’t wait to see you all in Seattle this April!

Jason Sweet: I moved to Kansas City in Jan. 2006 after finishing course work for my Master’s at K-State. I worked with a large group of K-State
Alumni at the Kansas City District Corps of Engineers. That was a great time with great people. In July 2009 I took a job with Greenhorne and O’Mara in Overland Park. Our office serves as the Region VII Regional Support Center for and FEMA’s RiskMAP Program. The program’s main goals include identifying flood risk and helping communities develop effective watershed level mitigation plans. The group here is smaller and K-State Alumni are not the majority but I’m not the only one. One of the office engineers is also a Wildcat and a family friend of Dr. Bimal Paul. Personal life has changed since moving to KC too. I now have three daughters Cami – 6, Libby – 3, and Louisa – 1. They do make things very interesting. I’m looking forward to making trips back to Manhattan for the Geography Career Day and hopefully the GTU Banquet. I’ll also be on the lookout for Wildcat Geographers at the ESRI User’s Conference this summer.

Vicki Tinnon: It has been a pretty exciting year for me! I completed my doctorate in May 2010. It took a while, but it sure was a great feeling. I did walk at graduation and my major professor, Dr. Bimal Paul, was there to hood me. I taught at Wayne State College in Nebraska from August 2007 to August 2010 while completing my degree. I accepted a position as an instructor at the University of Alabama for Fall 2010 and I will begin my second semester in January. I teach World Regional and an introductory course in physical geography.

I taught a field course this past summer with Dr. Joseph Weixelman at Wayne State College. The course, the History and Geography of the Southwest, involved a two-week field component that provided students the opportunity to experience the landscapes and culture of this unique region. We actually came through Manhattan, Kansas on our way to the Santa Fe Trail and we followed the route all the way to New Mexico. One of the interesting days involved a visit to the Cochiti Pueblo where we got to witness the Corn Dance and were invited to have dinner at the War Chief’s house. The students really enjoyed their time at the Grand Canyon and Sunset Crater. Though I had been to a number of places in the region, I had never visited Goosenecks – I finally made it there!

Jeff VanLooy: (MA 2002) This past year has been full of changes for us as I was offered (and took, of course) a job at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks as an Assistant Professor. My wife and I are quite happy with this position as we both are originally from Grand Forks and still have many relatives in the area. Our daughter, Nora (almost 3 years old now) is enjoying lots of time with both sets of grandparents (oh yeah, the grandparents don’t mind much either). Interestingly, the new job at UND is not in the Geography Department, but instead in the Department of Earth System Science and Policy (ESSP). This department has a research focus with a graduate’s only program (MS, MEM, and PhD). I have really enjoyed being in this program as I have had lots of time to get research done. Most of the departmental research is focused on North Dakota and the Great Plains, but we all have the opportunity to work in other areas as well. Currently, I’m interested in land cover/land use change in the Sheyenne National Grassland in southeast ND, and my external interest is with glacial changes in North America. Although I am in a different department I often connect with faculty in the Geography Department, and in a way UND has become K-State number two as there are three geography alumni in the UND Geography Department and I am the outlying number four.

Kay Weller and Ray McDonald: Escorted a group of 42 Iowa teachers and their spouses on a workshop that included the Inside Passage of Alaska as well as Denali National Park. It was a delightful two weeks.

We continue to get back to campus for a couple of football games each fall. Our family remains very spatially distributed from the East Coast, to Texas to Europe. It makes family reunions few and far between. We will travel this year to Eastern Europe and spend time with European family members before returning home. Kay Weller
RECENT K-STATE GEOGRAPHY GRADUATE FINDS JOB MAPPING OIL SPILL

MANHATTAN -- Matthew Hosey says he's had lots of jobs, but none has been as stressful or chaotic as his last one: helping keep tabs on the massive Gulf oil spill.

Hosey, who earned his bachelor's in geography from Kansas State University in May 2010, put his degree and skills in geographic information systems to work as a GIS analyst at an oil spill incident command post in Mobile, Ala. His job was collecting and distributing data related to the spill, including making maps. The maps were used daily by the top people making tactical plans for dealing with the spill.

"I also was in charge of presenting maps every day in the situation unit briefings to the highest personnel in the response, including British Petroleum senior executives, the captain of the U.S. Coast Guard and many others," said Hosey, a graduate of Goddard High School.

"Some of the maps we created were air operations maps that the Coast Guard used for aerial visual confirmation of where the oil was flowing. They then contacted commercial vessels to skim in the heaviest oil spots," he said.

Hosey said one of his maps was shown on CNN, while another one -- a boom retrieval-related map -- has been selected for display at a geographic information systems-related conference in San Diego.

Hosey's command post was responsible for oil spill operations in Mississippi, Alabama and Florida's panhandle. He was contracted for the work through the company The Response Group.

"When I first got down there, I didn't know what I had gotten myself into," Hosey said. "It was the most stressful first week of any job I've ever had -- and I've had many jobs. It was mass chaos. They weren't afraid to throw me right into the mix either. It took some hard work and endurance to get used to everything.

"The skills I collected at K-State, including from the geography department and its geographic information sciences program, are the biggest reasons I was successful," he said.

The days were long -- 12-14 hours on average -- but Hosey said he enjoyed the two-month experience.

"It's been amazing," he said. "I love geography, so learning about new parts of the world definitely sparks my interest. That's why I study geography -- so I can relate to new surroundings and understand how each region of the globe operates differently. It was very exciting to explore a new place."

Residents of the Gulf shore, understandably, aren't happy about the spill, Hosey said.

"They've been taking the situation in stride -- but that's about all they can do. The overall mood, I would say, is very displeased, but the people are still friendly because they know they're all in it together," he said. "Fishing and the Gulf waters are these people's lives. The spill was always the talk of the town everywhere I went along the Gulf Coast."

As most of the oil gets cleaned up, the jobs phase out -- including Hosey's.
"The mood in the building also changed from chaos to a feeling of success. It feels very good to have been a part in a major response effort like this one. I'm glad that I could help," he said.

The geographer in Hosey is excited about his next career opportunity, whether it be in the U.S. or overseas.

"I've made a lot of really good contacts down there, so I'll take some time to weigh all my options," he said. "The connections I've made during the response are a very valuable resource."

Hosey is the son of Alan and Cindy Hosey, Goddard.

**THE ECOSYSTEM ENGINEER: RESEARCH LOOKS AT BEAVERS' ROLE IN RIVER RESTORATION**

MANHATTAN – When engineers restore rivers, one Kansas State University professor hopes they'll keep a smaller engineer in mind: the North American beaver.

Beavers are often called ecosystem engineers because they can radically alter stream or valley bottom ecosystems, said Melinda Daniels, an associate professor of geography who recently studied the connection between beavers and river restoration. Beaver dams create diverse river landscapes, she said, and can turn a single-thread channel stream into a meadow, pond or multichannel, free-flowing stream.

"Our argument is that the restoration target for streams with forested riparian zones has got to acknowledge the diversity brought to river systems by active beaver populations," Daniels said.

Daniels and three researchers from the University of Connecticut co-authored "The River Discontinuum: Applying Beaver Modifications to Baseline Conditions for Restoration of Forested Headwaters." The article, led by Denise Burchsted at the University of Connecticut, appears in a recent issue of BioScience, the journal of the American Institute of Biological Sciences.

While the research involves observations of several watersheds in northeastern Connecticut, the results are applicable to any forested stream, which typically have large beaver populations. Beaver populations have rebounded in recent years, Daniels said, after coming close to extinction in the early 19th century by hunters for their fur.

The ultimate goal of the research, Daniels said, is to help restore rivers in an efficient way that acknowledges ecosystem diversity and doesn't destroy it.

"A lot of rivers are in trouble and need work and restoration, but it's amazing how little we know about the systems we're trying to fix," she said. "We know they're broken, but we don't exactly know what they should look like because we know so little about how many of our river systems function."
Current restoration projects often don't consider the role of beavers as ecosystem engineers, and instead focus on creating continuous free-flowing streams, Daniels said. Such restoration can be expensive because it usually involves completely tearing down small 19th-century milldams and re-engineering an entire valley bottom.

Rather than tear down the whole milldam and radically change the surrounding ecosystem, the researchers recommend river restorers only remove part of it. This allows some ponded water to remain and mimics the role of beavers. Daniels said that in many cases if an old dam breaks and forms a gap, beavers may build their own dam to patch the gap and recreate the ecosystem that previously existed.

The researchers plan to continue river observations and collect more data to provide river restorers with insight for maintaining river ecosystem diversity.

"You can use these natural analogs to produce an ecosystem that looks a lot more like the one that was there before the colonists arrived," Daniels said. "We can restore rivers in a way that mimics the naturally diverse beaver streams, and we can save a lot of money in the process."

News release prepared by: Jennifer Torline, 785-532-0847, jtorline@k-state.edu

KONZA PRAIRIE RESEARCH TO BENEFIT GRASSLANDS WORLDWIDE

MANHATTAN -- Scientists at Konza Prairie Biological Station have received major funding for research on critical questions about the underlying decisions made by grazing animals and the effects on grassland dynamics.

Konza is jointly owned by Kansas State University and The Nature Conservancy and managed by K-State's Division of Biology.

The National Science Foundation recently awarded Tony Joern, university distinguished professor in biology at K-State, and collaborators John Briggs, director of Konza Prairie Biological Station; Douglas Goodin, professor of geography; Adam Skibbe, information manager in biology; and Gene Towne, research associate in biology, $750,000 to study how and why grazing animals choose certain feeding locations, and the impact of the grazing on the tallgrass prairie ecology.

"Grazing animals are a major driving force for grasslands all over the world, but how they actually use space is poorly understood," Joern said. "Understanding how bison and cattle actually select areas to graze on native grasslands will provide new management opportunities for grassland conservation efforts; as well develop alternate grazing options for grassland managers."

The group will use comparative studies by Towne on the effects of bison and cattle as background for the current study, Joern said. Towne's studies have shown that cattle and bison do not feed uniformly, so the goal is to get a better idea of the decisions the animals are making to determine where they forage. Joern said there may be several factors that influence feeding choices, such as forage nutritional quality, height of vegetation, landscape position, weather conditions and the area's level of fire frequency.
"There are a lot of data out there that suggest herbivores prefer to graze on burned areas, but within those areas how do they finally decide which clump of grass to chomp on?" Briggs said. American bison will be used as the model species for the experiment, and they will be given access to various areas on Konza with differing forage quality, burn frequency and landscape positions, thus allowing the animals the opportunity to choose which area they prefer to feed. "Konza Prairie is the ideal site for this type of research because it is set up in a huge watershed level experiment, where we already manipulate grazing and fire frequency," Joern said. "When you burn the prairie at different intervals you get different kinds of grassland with different forage qualities. We are layering this new grazing experiment on top of all that."

To evaluate the nutritional quality of the prairie, the group will deploy a hyper-spectral remote imaging aircraft four times a year. This methodology, under the direction of Goodin, will measure the spatial distribution of the protein content of the grassland at a two-meter scale. Spatial distributions of nutritional quality of vegetation will be compared to data on bison movement, gathered using global positioning system collars that track the animals' movement as they feed. Geographic information system modeling, done under the direction of Skibbe, will correlate these two data sets. In addition to tracking bison movement, the group will also record vegetation responses to bison grazing activity.

A special component of the project is the involvement of Drew Ising, a high school biology teacher with the Geary County School District. Ising is interested in including ecology research in his classroom, and will be using real data from the grazing study to develop lesson plans in a multitude of subjects for use by other teachers. "Having enthusiastic teachers like Drew participate in the project to make our results available to students is really exciting, and we plan to do some pretty exciting things with this opportunity," Joern said.

K-STATE GEOGRAPHY PROFESSOR AND GRADUATE STUDENT RECEIVE GRANT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON MASS MOVEMENT AND CROSS-VALLEY PROFILES

MANHATTAN — A Kansas State University geography professor and graduate student recently received a $5,000 grant from the University of Wyoming’s National Park Service Research Station to conduct research on mass movement of rocks and cross-valley profiles

K-State’s Richard Marston, distinguished professor of geography, and Brandon Weihs, graduate student in geography, Crescent, Iowa, will conduct their research July 6-Aug. 5 in Grand Teton National Park in northwestern Wyoming. Marston and Weihs selected William Butler, graduate student in geography, to assist as a co-researcher on the project.

In addition to funding the basics of the project, the grant will also be supporting Weihs’ dissertation research on cross-valley profiles and Butler’s masters thesis research on mass movement hazards to hikers and campers.
According to Marston, their research will entail describing and explaining the size and shape of glacial valleys in the Teton Mountains. They will also be creating a map of hazards from slope failures, such as landslides and avalanches, within the national park facility.

The team’s research will not only lead to a better understanding of the origins of the mountain scenery in the park, Marston said, but it will also benefit the future safety of park visitors.

“Scientists and administrators in Grand Teton National Park are aware of the hazard to park visitors created by rock falls and avalanches,” he said. “The hazards are especially critical because of the very active Teton Fault along the eastern base of the mountain range. Creation of a map of these hazards will provide the park with another management tool to protect park visitors in summer and winter.”

Fieldwork for this project will involve hiking and backpacking to sample sites within the four study-area valleys of the park, Weihs said. At each of these sites, the three researchers will perform quantitative tests of rock properties such as measuring rock joint spacing and orientation, evaluating water output of rocks and defining the compressive strength of the rocks using a Schmidt rock hammer.

“Fieldwork really means a lot to any geographer,” Weihs said. “We must always go to the places we study so that we can see it, smell it, touch it, measure it…They often call this ‘boots on the ground’ geography. I can't wait to get my boots dirty again.”

**K-STATE PROFESSOR USES REMOTE SENSING TO TRACK SPREAD OF HANTAVIRUS**

MANHATTAN -- If a picture is worth a thousands words, several pictures may hold the key to combating a deadly disease, one Kansas State University researcher believes.

Since 2004, Doug Goodin, professor of geography, has been using remote sensing in Paraguay and Brazil to study the effects of the hantavirus in relation to changes in the physical landscape. Specifically, Goodin said he is examining how these physical changes are affecting mice and other small mammals that are the reservoirs of the virus, and in return how these hantavirus varieties are affected by changes in the reservoir species. A reservoir is host organisms in which the virus can replicate.

"Hantavirus refers to several varieties of viruses that are chiefly spread by wild rodents," he said. "The viruses primarily cause acute respiratory illness and kidney failure, among other syndromes."

Although it is estimated that varieties of the virus have been present in Europe and Asia for some time, it didn't start to gain notoriety within the United States until 1993, when there was an outbreak of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, or HPS, in the Four Corners - a region consisting of southwest Colorado, northwest New Mexico, northeast Arizona and southeast Utah. Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome typically has a 20-40 percent fatality rate.
According to his data, there is a correlation in physical changes to the landscape and the presence of the virus within its reservoir, Goodin said.

Goodin believes if researchers can discover how the virus evolves, they can find out how it works, which will ultimately lead to creating more effective clinical treatments that can combat the different varieties.

"Viruses continually evolve and adapt to changes in their reservoir mammals, which might in turn drive adaptive or evolutionary changes in the virus," Goodin said. "Right now, by tracking and understanding this, it's possible that people could eventually predict where outbreaks of the disease might occur."
By pinpointing these outbreak locations, or hotspots, countries with limited medical infrastructures can be warned of the danger and prepare in advance for it, he said.

The current belief, Goodin said, is that the outbreaks of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome are associated with the climate, and in particular with heavy rainfall.

"The idea is that if you get a lot of rain, it causes the ecosystem to be more productive, which essentially provides more food for the reservoir and then causes a population boom because more offspring get born. These offspring then start spreading out along the landscape, carrying the virus with them, and then when they come in contact with people we get a disease outbreak," Goodin said. "It's sound reasoning."
"The system that we're looking at in Paraguay, though, is a subtropical rainforest, so its productivity is a lot more loosely tied to its precipitation climatology. Because of this, you don't see this pattern of population dynamics following precipitation or climate cues quite as closely," he said.
What is seen are the actions of humans changing the surface of the earth through agriculture and the continual reemergence and evolution of the hantavirus, Goodin said. These changes in the virus are tied to changes in the landscape.

Goodin conducted his research with the assistance of a grant from the National Institutes of Health.
Remote sensing is the science of gathering data on an object or area by using radar or infrared images shot from space.

SOIL RESEARCH PROVIDES NEW INSIGHT INTO FUTURE GLOBAL WARMING PREDICTIONS

MANHATTAN -- Soil that was once thought to be the least vulnerable to decomposition is actually the most sensitive to increasing temperatures, making it more likely to release carbon into the atmosphere as the climate warms, according to researchers at Kansas State University and a colleague in Colorado.

Joseph Craine, K-State research assistant professor of biology; Kendra McLauchlan, K-State assistant professor of geography; and Noah Fierer, assistant professor of ecology at the University of Colorado at Boulder, are the authors of "Widespread Coupling between the Rate and Temperature Sensitivity of Organic Matter Decay,"
published recently in the journal Nature Geoscience. Their data will be used to develop a model for more accurately predicting future global warming.

With more than $450,000 in grants from the National Science Foundation, the three researchers analyzed microbial decomposition of soil organic matter from 28 different sets of soils collected from sites across North America -- stretching from Alaska to Puerto Rico. The samples were incubated for a year, periodically altering the temperatures to measure changes in the rate of soil microbe respiration.

"We found that as we warmed different soils, those soils that were the hardest for microbes to degrade showed the greatest response to the increase in temperature," Craine said. "We were the first to demonstrate that chemical laws discovered more than 120 years ago predict how warming affects microbial decomposition of soil carbon."

Based on their research and the results from other studies that incubated a range of organic materials like simple sugars, leaves, roots and other soils, the group discovered a general relationship that clearly shows that carbon molecules in the soil with the most chemical resistance to microbial enzymes are most sensitive to temperature increases.

"The future of the Earth's temperature depends on the ability of soils to retain carbon as the world warms," Craine said. "Globally, soils contain about twice as much carbon as found in the atmosphere and three times as much found in vegetation. That means even a small percent increase in carbon released from the soil could have a major impact on the atmosphere and future warming."

The process of removing carbon from the atmosphere and storing it in the soil is a natural part of the carbon cycle, although soil carbon varies greatly in quality, Craine said. A small portion of the carbon stored in the soil can be returned to the atmosphere through decomposition, when soil microbes digest organic matter and release carbon dioxide as a byproduct.

"Soil carbon quality is best explained by how easy it is for organic matter in the soil to decompose," McLauchlan said. "Chemically speaking, things with a lower carbon quality are harder for microbes to eat, and they're just more complicated structurally."

Evidence from the study contradicted the group's original hypothesis by finding that complicated carbon molecules are more sensitive to increasing temperatures in varied soil samples.

"The results were surprising, in a sense, because we think that the more complicated a carbon molecule is, the more difficult it should be to break down," McLauchlan said. "It should be protected; basically it should be inaccessible and be very stable in the soil; however, what's protecting it is thermodynamics. When you add heat, that makes those reactions go, and the soil becomes vulnerable."

The group will be developing an equation that can be used in models to simulate data about future emissions of carbon dioxide from the soil in response to warming, Craine said. The data could ultimately become the basis for politicians to enact legislation to prepare for and to mitigate future warming.
"The work does not, in and of itself, tell us how much more carbon dioxide will enter the atmosphere as the Earth warms, but it does provide a key equation that can be incorporated into computer models," Craine said. "It's possible that we have been vastly underestimating how much additional carbon dioxide will enter the atmosphere."

RESEARCHERS GET WINE TASTING DOWN TO A SCIENCE AS K-STATE PROFESSOR, COLLEAGUE USE GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS TO QUANTIFY THE IMPACT OF PLACE ON FRENCH WINE

MANHATTAN -- Using geography, a Kansas State University professor and his colleague are working to back up what wine-lovers already know to be true.
That is, the difference that soil, weather and location make in the taste of a vintage. The French refer to it as "terroir," and the researchers' goal is to scientifically identify and map terroir categories that will benefit the producers who make wines and the connoisseurs who enjoy drinking them.

Shawn Hutchinson, a K-State associate professor of geography on sabbatical in France, is working with Michael Gay, a professor at the University of Toulouse-Ecole d'Ingenieurs de Purpan. They are using geographic information systems -- known as GIS -- to quantify the impact of place on the quality of grapes and the wine that is produced.

"Few wine enthusiasts would confuse a wine originating from Bordeaux with one from the Languedoc region of France, even though they might have been produced from the same species of grapes," Hutchinson said. "While the traditional wine making processes employed in those areas certainly contribute to differences, of equal importance is where and how the grapes were grown, including differences in weather, soils and topographical orientation."

Hutchinson said it is widely known that how and where grapes are grown and enological practices have significant impact on wine quality. However, he said few have established a quantitative link between place and quality.

To establish this link, Hutchinson and Gay are looking at the following data from the study area in southwest France: elevation, topographic slope, surface curvature, hours of sunlight and solar radiation during the growing season, and the topographic wetness index, which measures how moist soils may become during a precipitation event.

Then, the researchers are classifying the data to map where the data are similar. In their preliminary results, Hutchinson and Gay have found 10 distinct terroir classes in the Saint Mont region of southwestern France. Next, they will determine whether the vineyards in these terroir classes produce grapes -- and ultimately wine -- of differing quality. They will measure quality based on chemical analyses performed after the 2008 harvest, looking at elements like acidity and alcohol content.
"What we want to do is provide a scientifically valid but market-oriented name to each of the 10 terroir classes, assuming, as our early statistical analyses show, that they are directly correlated to wine quality," Hutchinson said. "Many wine enthusiasts, but especially the French, are very interested in knowing how and where their foods have been grown. The ability of a wine cooperative to include a terroir class in the label information will be well received by French consumers, as it helps meet this informational need."

Department Photos:

Stephen Stover, Charles Bussing, David Kromm, Huber Self
Emeritus Faculty

Bimal Paul and Stephen Stover
Attending GTU Chilli Cook-off
Students on 2010 Amazon Geography Study Abroad Class

Field Methods Students Spring 2010
HOW CAN ALUMNI GET INVOLVED AND SUPPORT K-STATE GEOGRAPHY?

We have been working hard to implement recommendations of the KSU Geography Alumni Board to increase the variety of ways that our alumni can interact with and support the Department of Geography.

1. To keep-up with events and news in the department, take a look at the department’s web site (www.ksu.edu/geography) and click on “K-State Geography in the News” for links to multiple news releases. Also, the weekly Seaton Globe and annual Geography Alumni Newsletter are posted at our departmental website.

2. In recent years, we have hosted a reception for K-State Geography alumni, students and faculty at the AAG Annual Meeting. We will do this once again at the 2011 AAG Meeting in Seattle, Washington on April 12, 2011. A notice will be sent to everyone on our Alumni email distribution list.

3. Make a donation to support K-State Geography students and/or other department needs. You can do this by sending a check to the K-State Foundation, payable to them, but remember to add a note in the memo line of your check that the funds are to be deposited in account F26200, the Geography Foundation Account. You can mail your check to us and we will make sure it is passed along to the Foundation. Or, mail it directly to the K-State Foundation at 2323 Anderson Drive, Manhattan, KS 66502-2911. You can specify how your donation is to be used, or designate it as discretionary funds to be used where most needed. Our three biggest needs are:
   - Student scholarships: one of the existing named scholarships (see the list elsewhere in this newsletter), or make a donation to be applied to scholarships where most needed.
   - Student development: funds to travel to professional meetings where students present their research, or funds to support student participation in professional development workshops. For example, the Geography Faculty Development Workshop in Boulder, CO, is one workshop each summer that would be of great benefit to our doctoral students but carries a $1200 registration fee.
   - Funds for teaching equipment in our classrooms and labs.

4. Consider a major gift for a new specific purpose that is important to you. For instance, a $30,000 donation will support an annual $1500 student scholarship or award. A $100,000 endowment will support a $5000 annual award for outstanding faculty. A $250,000 endowment would establish a lecture series with $12,500 per year in expendable funds to pay for honoraria, publicity and expenses of guest lecturers in geography. If you would like to make an impact on the Department of Geography you can contact Damon Fairchild, Development Officer for the College of Arts and Sciences at the KSU Foundation, about opportunities and information at 785-532-7524 or damonf@found.ksu.edu.

5. Join us at our annual Spring GTU/Geography Awards Banquet, held on or close to the campus in late April or early May (announcement will be forthcoming via email to alumni).

6. Every February since 2008, the Geography Alumni Board has organized a Geography Career Day. Several government agencies and private firms interview a large number of students. Alumni give short presentations to all interested students on resume preparation and interview skills. Consider participating if you are in a position to hire geographers.

7. Visit the department and offer to give a department colloquium or Brown Bag Lunch seminar about your professional or travel experiences. We would love to hear about it.
Mankato natives establish fund to support K-State geography
Milton and Emma Jean Rafferty, Springfield, Mo., have made a gift of $50,000 to the Department of Geography in the College of Arts and Sciences at Kansas State University to establish the Milton and Emma Jean Rafferty Gamma Theta Upsilon Scholarship.

The scholarship will benefit undergraduate or graduate students enrolled in the Department of Geography who are also active participants in the Beta Psi Chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon at K-State. Gamma Theta Upsilon is the International Geography Honor Society. The Beta Psi Chapter is a registered student organization at K-State and was founded in 1959. The scholarship was established with a distribution from an IRA account, a giving option that has the potential to benefit many other retired individuals, after the passage of a recent tax bill.

Milton and Emma Jean are both natives of Mankato, Kan. Milton graduated from K-State in 1959 with a bachelor’s degree in geography, and earned a bachelor’s degree in secondary education, with minors in geology and history in 1960. He was a founding member of the Beta Psi Chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon, which influenced the Raffertys’ decision to establish the scholarship. Milton went on to become head of the geography department at Missouri State University, in Springfield, Mo., where he spent more than 30 years of his career. The Raffertys have been consistent donors to K-State’s Department of Geography over the past three decades. Milton and Emma Jean are members of the KSU Foundation’s Presidents Club, a philanthropic leadership organization for friends and alumni of K-State.

Philanthropic contributions to K-State are coordinated by the Kansas State University Foundation. The foundation staff works with university partners to build lifelong relationships with alumni, friends, faculty, staff and students through involvement and investment in the university.
Kansas State University Geography Alumni Update Form

We enjoy hearing from you, the Geography Alumni, so please take a few minutes to complete the following form, now, before you forget! Your information and comments will be included in the next Alumni Newsletter.

http://www.ksu.edu/geography/alumni_form.html

Thank you very much!