



DEPARTMENT OF  
**GEOGRAPHY**

College of Arts and Sciences

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Geography

# Geography Newsletter

November 2023

## Fall Happenings

The summer heat has finally given way to an Autumn that appears to be responding to El Niño's return after three years of La Niña. The Thanksgiving holiday is now upon us, and we have many good news items to share in this Geography Awareness Week (November 13-17) issue of the newsletter.

## Senior of Significance



Lily Chavez, Global Studies BA student, has been selected as a College of Arts & Sciences Senior of Significance, a high award bestowed by the OSU Alumni Association. She was recently featured in a College of Arts & Sciences profile titled "OSU Student Begins a Nonprofit to Supply Water Across the Globe." Lily was recognized at an OSU Alumni Association ceremony November 16<sup>th</sup> and was among 59 top OSU seniors selected to receive this honor.

## Fall Happenings



Lily founded the nonprofit Wishes for Water in 2023 to build wells in rural Zimbabwe. Inspired during a trip with the President's Leadership Council, she witnessed water scarcity's impact and partnered with OSU alumna Dr. Tererai Trent's organization, Tererai Trent International, which focuses on education and community development in Zimbabwe. Wishes for Water, launched in January 2023, aims to build two wells annually at \$15,000 each. The team uses crowdfunding and social media for fundraising. By spring 2023, they raised \$15,000 for their first well in Hurungwe school district. Congratulations, Lily!

## Colloquium

On October 9th  
Dr. Michael Kerwin,  
Director of the  
Environmental  
Science Program in  
the Department of  
Geography & the  
Environment at the  
University of Denver,



presented a lively colloquium titled "As megadrought lingers in the Colorado River basin, can U.S. policymakers learn from South Africa's response to the Day Zero crisis?"

# Fall Happenings

## Introduction to Physical Geography Field Trip

The Fall GEOG 1114 field trip to sites in northwest Oklahoma went well. We had sunny weather and motorcoaches at capacity on October 10th and 11th. Among the stops were the new windfarm near Hennessey, a hike up onto the caprock of the Gloss Mountains, a longer hike around active and stabilized dunes at Little Sahara near Waynoka, an exploration of Karst landscapes at Alabaster Caverns, and examining fluvial geomorphology on the Cimarron River.



Fieldtrip staff included instructor and Physical Geography Coordinator Dr. Carlos Cordova, instructor Dr. Brad Bays, and Teaching Assistants Sadril Khan, Lauren McIntosh, Katelyn Ososkie, and Chloe Taylor. The success of the trip is largely the work of the excellent work provided by the Geography Department office staff, Barbara Goodnight and Ana Segoviano as well as the skilled drivers of Village Travel.

## Fall Happenings

### Dissertation Defended



Kimberly Johnson Maier successfully defended her dissertation, "Sustaining the Frontier Myth at the Ingalls Homestead: A Relational and Spatialized Analysis of a Wilder-Scape," on Friday, October 13th in Stillwater. Dr. Rebecca Sheehan served as Kim's research advisor. Dr. Johnson Maier earned her BA from Northern State University and her MS from South Dakota State University. She is currently a faculty member in the Department of Geography and Geospatial Sciences at South Dakota State University in Brookings.

### Recruiting Events

On Wednesday October 11, Thomas LaVanchy, Jean Wang, and Jon Comer represented the department at **OSU Up Close**, an annual recruiting event at Gallagher-Iba Arena for at high school seniors (and their parents). Our new drone was of great interest to the students, and even Pistol Pete paid us a visit.



On Wednesday, October 18, Brad Bays, Don Colley, and Jon Comer staffed the Geography table at the annual **OSU Majors and Minors Fair** in the SU Ballroom. Current freshmen were the clientele at this browsing event, where they learned about the department's majors, minors, and certificate programs. MS student Melissa Wynn also helped out during most of the 3-hour event, with other grads and faculty stopping by as well.

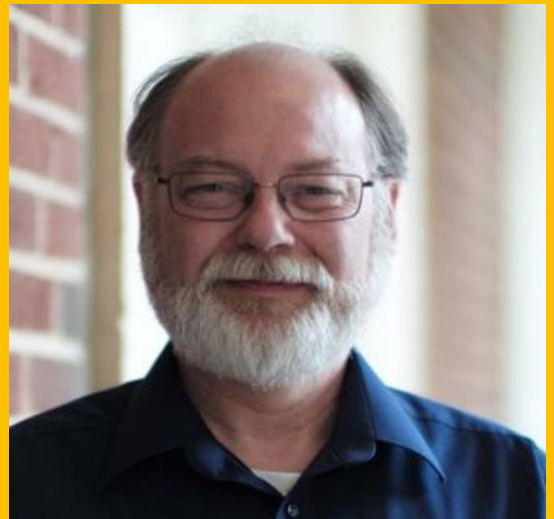
## Fall Happenings

### Grants Awarded



In August, **Dr. Hamed Gholizadeh**, Assistant Professor, received a \$468,000 NSF grant for OSU to get an Advanced Low-Altitude Earth Observing System (ALEOS) with Hyperspectral and LiDAR capabilities. This UAS-mounted instrument will support interdisciplinary research and training for over 18 investigators across 10 departments. It offers STEM training to many students, including those from underrepresented groups. ALEOS will enhance job prospects in drone technology, involve over 170 students annually in practical projects like aerosol emission studies, and be part of OSU's outreach events. It will enable innovative research in agriculture and natural resource management and support large-scale monitoring systems like the ISS. The team will share findings through publications, curricula, and outreach.

**Dr. Hongbo Yu**, Associate Professor, and **Michael Larson**, Director of OSU Cartography Services, have received a \$170,000 contract funded by the National Park Service (NPS) to complete a new Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office (OK/SHPO) database improvement project. The project involves maintaining the Oklahoma Landmarks Inventory (OLI) database, digitizing analog data, and implementing an online Section 106 submission system and search tool for the OLI database and National Register of Historic Places database. The system is expected to greatly enhance the state agency's efficiency in processing Section 106 reviews.



## Fall Happenings

### Grants Awarded



**Dr. Yuting Zhou**, Assistant Professor, and **Dr. Hamed Gholizadeh**, Assistant Professor, have received a College of Arts & Sciences Technology fee grant for \$12,799 toward the purchase of a UAV-platformed thermal camera which can be used in remote sensing, GIS, and physical geography courses.

Dr. Zhou has also received an award from AmericaView for \$23,500 to fund a project with OSU Extension to promote the use of remote sensing in agriculture and natural resource management in rural communities of northwest Oklahoma.

Dr. Zhou is also co-PI with PI Jia N Yang (NREM) and co-PI Samuel D. Fuhlendorf (NREM) on a four-year project funded by the federal Joint Fire Science Program for \$150,395 titled "Effectiveness of Fuel Treatment by Prescribed Fires in Oklahoma Grasslands under Climate Change." The project will evaluate vegetation change and fuel accumulation over time after prescribed fires and determine the longevity of prescribed fire effectiveness in reducing the severity of potential wildfires under contemporary and future climate conditions.

### Homecoming

The 2023 OSU Homecoming Weekend began Friday afternoon with several college events preceding Walkaround. The weather was perfect for the Saturday parade and football game (OSU 48, WVU 34).

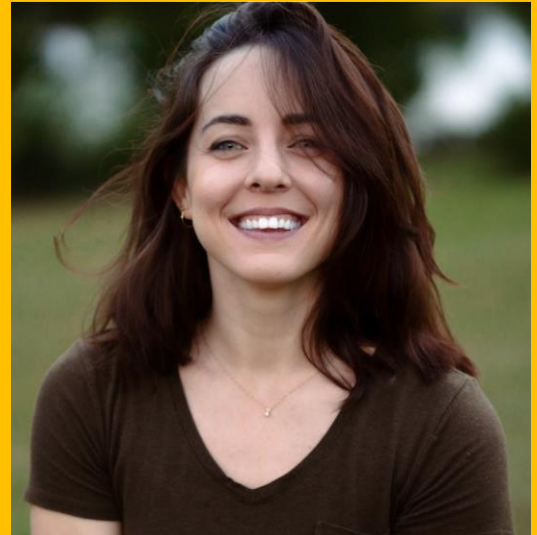


## Fall Happenings

### Peer-reviewed Papers Published

**Saber Brasher**, Daniel J. Leathers, Christina L. Callahan and Kathryn E. Giesa, (2023) "An analysis of the National Water Model for a mid-Atlantic suburban watershed," *Physical Geography*.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02723646.2023.2260546>



Assistant Professor Dr. Saber Brasher

Rakotoarivony, N., Gholizadeh, H., Hammond, W. M., Hassani, K., Joshi, O., Hamilton, R. G., Fuhlendorf, S. D., Trowbridge, A. M., Adams, H. D., (2023) "Detecting the invasive *Lespedeza cuneata* in grasslands using commercial small satellite imagery", *International Journal of Remote Sensing*.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01431161.2023.227532>

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PhD Student Ny Aina Rakotoarivony

## Fall Happenings

### Conference Presentations

Late October and early November were busy conference weeks. Dr. Jon Comer attended the **Applied Geography Conference** in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where he presented “Ethnic Migration Behavior of Chinese Immigrants in the New York-Newark-Jersey City Metropolitan Area,” which was co-authored with **Yanxia Wu**.



**Dr. Comer**, Professor and Interim Head, OSU Department of Geography with his former student:

**Dr. Stacey Brown**, Professor and Chair, Department of Geography and Geographic Information Sciences, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville.

During the first few days of November, six OSU geographers travelled to Laredo for the annual meeting of the **Southwest Division of the American Association of Geographers (SWAAG)**, which was hosted by the Department of Social Sciences at Texas A&M International University.

Faculty and graduate student paper presentations included:

**Dr. Alyson Greiner**, “What Did We Say and Just Who Were “We”? A Study of the Geographical Review.”

**Dr. Rebecca Sheehan**, “Obfuscating Gender and Race in the American Frontier through Embodied Affect: Historical Fiction Tourism at the Ingalls Homestead in De Smet, South Dakota.”

**Dr. Rory Hill** and MS student **Melissa Wynn**, “Bringing atlases back into the classroom: reflections on teaching world regional geography.”

A highlight of this year’s SWAAG conference was the **student poster competition**. The competition included students from the University of New Mexico, the University of Arkansas, Texas Tech University, Texas State University, two from the University of Oklahoma, and two from Oklahoma State University.

AND THE WINNERS WERE . . .



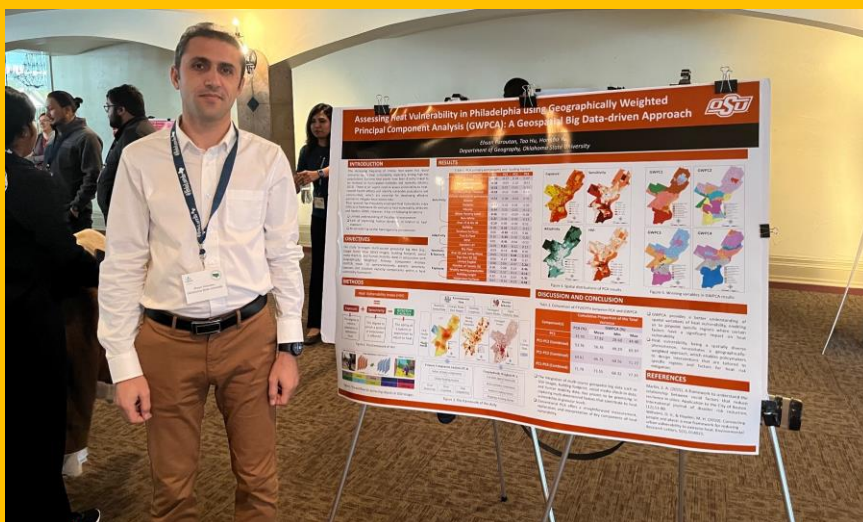
## Fall Happenings

### Conference Presentations

### *OSU GEOGRAPHERS!*

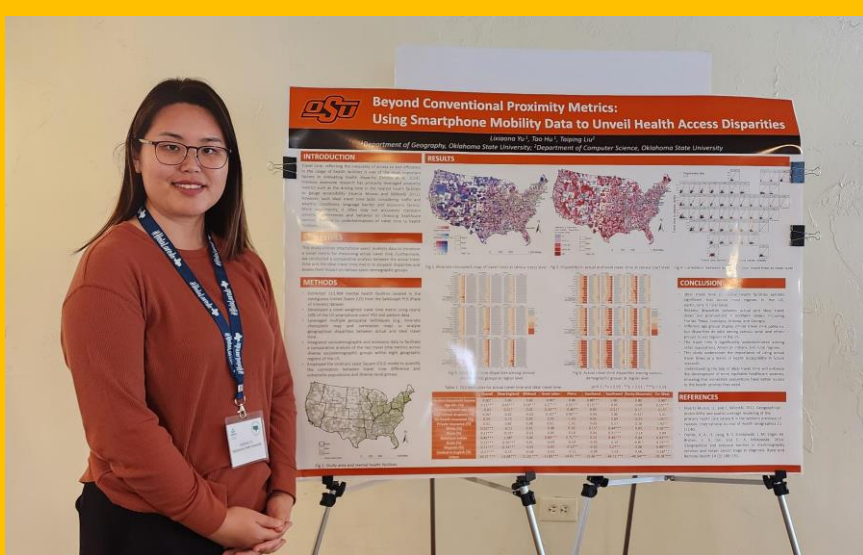
#### First Place

**Ehsan Foroutan**, who presented “Assessing Heat Vulnerability in Philadelphia using Geographically Weighted Principal Component Analysis (GWPCA): A Big Data-driven Approach.”



#### Second Place

**Una Yu**, who presented "Beyond Conventional Proximity Metrics: Using Smartphone Mobility Data to Unveil Health Access Disparities."



**CONGRATULATIONS!**

## Fall Happenings

### Alumni News: Dr. Aswin Subanthore



The Interview Portal recently spotlighted Aswin Subanthore, who earned his MS and PhD in Geography from Oklahoma State University. Here is an excerpt and link to the interview. Aswin writes:

. . . In my second Master's degree, this time in Geography, I specialized in agricultural geography and my thesis focused on the effect of conservation programs to the attitudes of farmers in the Northwestern corner of Oklahoma. This place is literally called the "No man's land" due to its sparse population. However, it is also the epicenter for the "Dust Bowl" disaster in the 1930s that wiped out the agricultural heartland of America and laid the foundation for protecting the country's food security. I chose this topic to gain more insights into field research and explore an area of the world which was vastly unknown to many people. As I was finishing up my second Master's degree, this time in Geography, I decided to pursue my deepest passion and interest, and that was teaching. I was always interested to share knowledge with others around me and I wanted to become an educator and a professor. For this reason, I started my PhD degree in Cultural Geography at Oklahoma State University. At first, I was not sure what I wanted to take up, but then I was fortunate to have a wonderful PhD advisor by the name of **Dr. Rebecca Sheehan** in the Geography Department at Oklahoma State University. Dr. Sheehan nurtured in me the art of research writing and more than a mentor, she became a friend and as important as a family member even to this day. Writing is a very important skill, and one cannot express great ideas, be it teaching or conducting research without knowing how to write.

Read Aswin's full interview at:

<https://theinterviewportal.com/2023/10/29/geography-mapping-specialist-interview/>