



ENVIRONEWS

Department of Environmental Studies, University of West Florida
11000 University Parkway, Pensacola, Florida 32514

Fall 2007 Issue 2

Department Happenings

By Klaus Meyer-Arendt

Greetings, students, faculty, staff, alumni, and other distinguished readers. Here we are, well into the fall semester and the 2007-08 academic year. We had a good turnout at my annual Fall Party, including all faculty, several adjuncts, and one member of our Advisory Board. Unfortunately, we have lost two of our esteemed faculty: Mel Droubay left the university after a dozen or so years in pursuit of outside endeavors and Chris Houser departed for the greener pastures of Texas A&M University. In spite of the void, there is good news. First, we have the competent and collegial Chasidy Hobbs as a full-time adjunct instructor for a year or two. Second, we have been given authorization to hire two assistant professors, one to start in fall 2008 and the other in fall 2009.

Our search committee is in place, and we are currently advertising for a Physical Geography/Physical Geology position (essentially the replacement position for Chris Houser). We plan to evaluate the applicants in mid-December and hopefully schedule interviews in January 2008. Stay tuned for more details.

Our online GIS Certificate program, developed and administered by our entrepreneurial Stu Hamilton, had a successful inaugural year. The university has decided to continue this profitable program, and recent M.S. graduate Amber Bloechle has accepted the

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position of program coordinator. Welcome, Amber.

The rest of our faculty is plugging along quite well in keeping the undergraduate and graduate programs running. Johan Liebens, currently applying for promotion to full professor, has taken over the role of graduate coordinator. Matt Schwartz, in turn, is the new science-track advisor. Zhiyong Hu continues to coordinate all activities related to GIS and remote sensing. John Waldron, the recent recipient of the prestigious Sakagawa fellowship, is developing a Geography of Japan course to be offered in spring 2008.

So, in spite of some setbacks, our department continues to move along relatively smoothly. SEAS, our student environmental club, have shown renewed activity recently. In fact, I want to thank our students for making this a great department.

Here's to a great 2007-08!!!!

Upcoming Meetings

SEDAAG - Southeastern Division of the American Association of Geographers, November 18 - 20, 2007 - Charleston, South Carolina

ASLO - American Society of Limnology and Oceanography, March 2 - 7, 2007 - Orlando, Florida

University of West Florida
Environmental Studies Department
offers a B.S. with three tracks: natural
science, policy and geography, and a
M.S. in Environmental Science, both
thesis and non-thesis track

New and Current Graduate Students

Colin Alexander

cta1@students.uwf.edu



Colin graduated from the University of West Florida in 2006 with a B.S. Degree in Environmental Studies - Policy. Colin enjoys sports and being part of protecting the environment. Currently, Colin has a GIS internship with Santa Rosa County.

Jeff Jackson

irj21@students.uwf.edu



Jeff graduated from Mississippi State University in 1984 with a B.S. Degree in Forestry. After graduating, Jeff worked with a forestry consultant firm in Marianna, FL for five years. Jeff's main interest lies in GIS, and he hopes to land a job in the field after graduating with his M.S. Degree from UWF. Currently, Jeff is working for the EPA Gulf Ecology Division, where he will be assisting with a 2 year GIS Database project.

Laura DuBose

led2@students.uwf.edu



Laura graduated from the University of West Florida in 2006 with a B.S. Degree in Environmental Studies - Geography. Laura enjoys weathering, zoology and coastal processes. Currently, Laura is studying the variations in limestone weathering in the southeastern United States.

Michael Johnson

mfj5@students.uwf.edu



Michael has a B.S. Degree in Marketing and is currently working on a M.S. Degree in Environmental Studies from UWF. Michael is interested in gaining a better understanding of the physical and biological processes that occur in the natural environment and the way in which society impacts those processes. Currently, Michael is the graduate lab instructor for Applications in GIS.

Glen Griffith

glenngriffith@bellsouth.net



Glenn graduated from the University of West Florida in 1997 with a B.S. Degree in Environmental Studies - Policy. Glenn enjoys sports, guitar and the outdoors. Glenn works as the Brownfields Coordinator for Escambia County's Neighborhood and Environmental Services Department, which is under the Community

Kirby Locklear

krl8@students.uwf.edu



Kirby graduated from USAF Academy in 1978 with a B.S. Degree in General Science. In 1992, Kirby graduated from Webster University with a M.A. in Management. Kirby served in the US Air Force for 22 years as an officer. He enjoys SCUBA, boating and fishing. Currently, Kirby is an Engineer for Jacobs Technology at Elgin AFB, FL.

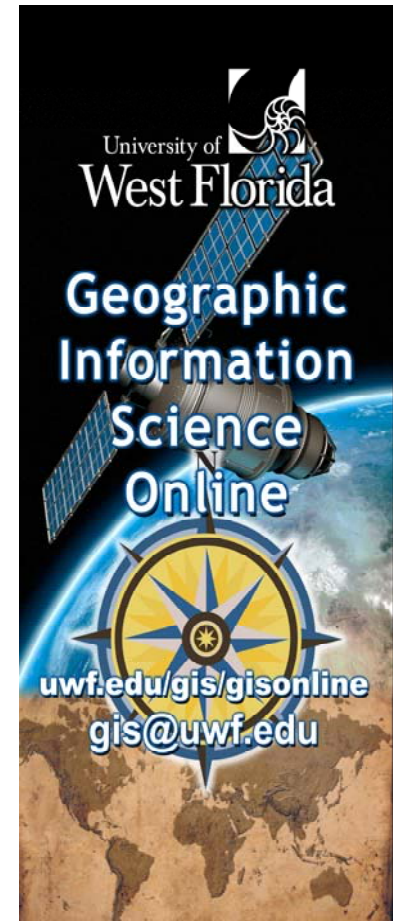
Current and Upcoming Faculty Research

Here are just a couple of snippets of some of the current and upcoming research that our talented faculty is undertaking.

Research Cruise to the South Pacific

This fall, Dr. Matt Schwartz and graduate student Jon Stewart will embark on a research cruise with Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute to the South Pacific Ocean. They will be aboard the R.V. Atlantis, a sophisticated research vessel that is equipped with precision navigation, bottom mapping and satellite communications systems. The *Atlantis* houses HOV (Human Operated Vessel) *Alvin*. The scientists on the cruise will be studying both the physical and biological oceanography of the area. The primary purpose of the trip is to look at hydrothermal vent communities. Dr. Schwartz and Jon will be collecting water samples and looking at the diapycnal mixing on the East Pacific Rise. The water samples will be analyzed in January and February of 2008. Dr. Schwartz hopes that the results of this study will help support another graduate student thesis. There could be a chance that either Dr. Schwartz or Jon will accompany another scientist and a pilot in HOV *Alvin*, where they will go to the bottom of the ocean floor. This research project is sponsored by the Environmental Studies Department, the College of Arts and Sciences and research and sponsored programs. Good luck Dr. Schwartz and Jon!!

R.V. Atlantis



Assessing Recovery of the Tourism Industry in Costa Maya, Mexico following Hurricane Dean

As mentioned in the spring issue of the newsletter, Dr. Klaus Meyer-Arendt was on sabbatical where he traveled through Mexico and Belize, and in particular Costa Maya, Mexico. Costa Maya is slated to be the next tourism boom region along the (mostly) Mexican Caribbean Coast, similar to Playa del Carmen. However, the Mexican Tourism Agency FONATUR has now imposed low-density land-use guidelines and a more environmentally friendly form of tourism is now encouraged. They want to avoid developing the rather rustic area into the next Cancun.

However, further progress of the area was halted on August 21, 2007 when Hurricane Dean swept over the Yucatan as a category-5 hurricane. Costa Maya suffered extensive damage to both the environment and surrounding structures. The roads were covered with coral/sand and the trees stripped of all vegetation. Dr. Meyer-Arendt traveled to Costa Maya soon after to investigate the impact of the hurricane on the coast and local tourism. He also wanted to know how quickly the area would be able to rebound from the damage. The damage was mostly localized and the port is estimated to be rebuilt sometime in mid to late 2008 for cruise ships to return.



Graduate Students Nearing Completion

Jennifer Chastain
jnc8@students.uwf.edu



Jennifer graduated from Florida State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Management Information Systems. Jennifer is interested in harmful algal blooms (red tide) and water column nutrient profiles. Currently, Jennifer is working on her thesis, where she is researching the spatial variability of phytoplankton and nutrient distributions in Choctawhatchee Bay.

Nathan McKinney
nmckinney@uwf.edu



Nathan graduated from the University of West Florida with a B.S. Degree in Environmental Studies - Geography. Nathan is interested in human/environment interactions, natural hazards, human created nature, water resources and land use. Currently, Nathan is working on his thesis where he is looking at tropical cyclones and human mortality. Nathan also is the instructor for Methods and Techniques.

Alison McDowell
adm17@students.uwf.edu



Alison graduated from the University of West Florida with a B.A. Degree in Interdisciplinary Humanities. Alison is interested in ecosystem restoration, surface water quality, and environmental sociology and public participation. Alison works for the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance as a project specialist/grant coordinator. Currently, Alison is working on her thesis, where she is comparing water quality parameters in two bayous in western Choctawhatchee Bay. She is monitoring nutrient regimes and hydrologic flow over a one-year period and considering the data in the context of rainfall and land-use patterns.

Brooke Saari
brs5@students.uwf.edu



Brooke graduated from Stetson University in 2004 with a B.S. Degree in Environmental Science and a minor in Biology. Brooke is interested in plants, biology, environmental issues, land management, restoration, education and outreach. Brooke works for the Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance. Her job focuses on working with the coastal dune lake ecosystem of Walton County, education/outreach, water quality, grant writing and community involvement. Currently, Brooke is in the process of completing her thesis where she has examined post-hurricane interactions between vegetation dynamics, dune recovery, and physical gradients on Santa Rosa Island.

Our department on the Emerald Coast Campus in Fort Walton Beach now offers the four-year B.S. degree in environmental policy. We have also recently implemented a joint B.S. with an online GIS certificate for our Emerald Coast students. If you would like further information regarding our program at the Fort Walton Beach campus please contact Dr. John Waldron at evrwb@uwf.edu

New and Current Graduate Students

Krista McGraw

kfm1@students.uwf.edu

Krista graduated from Florida State University with a B.A. Degree in International Affairs and French. Krista is interested in the hydrogeology of drinking water aquifers and springs and human rights and public health issues related to the environment. Currently, Krista works for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, where she is an environmental specialist in the potable water section.



Brail Stephens

bss2@students.uwf.edu

Brail graduated from the University of West Florida in 2007 with a B.S. Degree in Environmental Studies - Geography. Brail is interested in science and sea turtle conservation. Currently, Brail volunteers as a sea turtle patroller for Jackson Guard, Eglin AFB. For her thesis, she plans to research how lighting affects juvenile sea turtle hatchlings in the surrounding area.



Donald Mertz

donal58_2000@yahoo.com

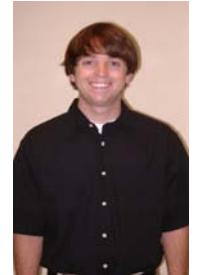
Don graduated from the University of West Florida with a B.A. in Interdisciplinary Humanities with a focus in Environmental Philosophy. Don is interested in cultural geography, biogeography and economic geography. Don has been a research assistant for Project Greenways in 2005. He also instructs labs online.



Jonathan Stewart

jas76@students.uwf.edu

Jonathan graduated from the University of West Florida in 2007 with a B.S. Degree in Environmental Studies - Natural Science. Jonathan is interested in submarine groundwater discharge, contaminate hydrology and estuarine biogeochemical processes. This fall, Jonathan will be assisting Dr. Schwartz on a research cruise to the South Pacific Ocean.



Michael Somerville

mfs12@students.uwf.edu

Michael is an international student from Belize, who graduated from the University of West Florida with a B.S. Degree in Environmental Natural Science. In the past, Michael conducted bio-diversity surveys in Northern Belize, and studied the impacts of fishermen on the marine resources of a portion of the Belize Barrier Reef System. Currently, Michael is studying surface soils with CEDB and Dr. Liebens.



Chris Taylor

jct13@students.uwf.edu

Chris graduated from the University of West Florida in 2003 with a B.A. Degree in Business. Chris is interested in GIS and Remote Sensing. Chris's current and past research includes managing natural resources through Community Based Natural Resource Management, post decentralization in developing countries.



Familiar Faces/New Additions to the Environmental Studies Department

Chasidy Hobbs
CHobbs@uwf.edu



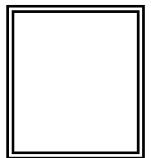
Chasidy graduated from the University of West Florida with a B.S. Degree in Environmental Studies - Policy. She also just recently defended her thesis and graduated from UWF with a M.S. Degree in Environmental Science. Chasidy set the bar by being the first student in our graduate program to defend her thesis. For her thesis she studied the variations in sedimentation rates, elevation, plant demography and tide levels within a constructed marsh. Shortly after her defense, Chasidy agreed to manage the construction of Phase II of Greenshores for the project engineer. Chasidy is now an adjunct professor with our department. Currently, she teaches two sections of Environmental Science, two sections of Physical Geography, and she advises. Chasidy is also developing an Urban Growth and Development class for the summer.

Amber Bloechle
abloechle@uwf.edu



Amber graduated from the University of West Florida with a B.S. Degree in Environmental Studies - Policy. Amber also just recently graduated from UWF with a M.S. Degree in Environmental Science with a focus on GIS Science and Coastal Studies. Amber is now the online GIS Certificate Coordinator where she is responsible for marketing and managing the program, developing courses, and instructing students for the online GIS certificate. She is also currently working on a project with the Environmental Protection Agency/Gulf Ecology Division, involving the development of a relational database to aid in modeling and managing water quality in the Gulf of Mexico Hypoxic Zone. Additionally, Amber is a data analyst for an ongoing and evolving UWF research project involving LIDAR data obtained since 2004 to present at Pensacola Beach, Florida.

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uwf.edu/environmental



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