

Spring 2012
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Mark Your Calendar and Bring the Whole Family to BioBlitz in Rocky Mountain National Park, August 2012



National Geographic describes BioBlitz as “a 24-hour event in which teams of volunteer scientists, families, students, teachers, and other community members work together to find and identify as many species of plants, animals, microbes, fungi, and other organisms as possible. A BioBlitz gives adults, kids, and teens the opportunity to join biologists in the field and participate in bona fide research expeditions. It’s a fun and exciting way to learn about the biological diversity of local parks and to better understand how to protect them.

“National Geographic is helping conduct a BioBlitz in a different national park each year during the decade leading up to the U.S. National Park Service Centennial in 2016. This year BioBlitz heads to Rocky Mountain National Park for BioBlitz 2012, August 24-25. For questions, and/or to receive updates and registration information when available, send an email to bioblitz@ngs.org.”

The Colorado Geographic Alliance will be hosting a booth at the BioDiversity Fair at the Estes Park Fairgrounds on Friday, August 24 and Saturday, August 25. If you are interested in helping out at the COGA booth during your visit to the BioBlitz, please email Sophia Linn at sophia.linn@colostate.edu.

NCGE Coming to Denver in July 2013



The annual conference of the National Council for Geographic Education will be held in Denver, July 24 -28, 2013. Mark your calendar to submit a proposal, help out at the Colorado welcome table, organize a session, or lead a fieldtrip. Email coga@uccs.edu and put NCGE 2013 in the subject line to let us know of your area of interest and expertise.

Geography Resources Across the Country

The Geographic Alliance Network is working to ensure that you can access material supporting geography education through a variety of means. Whether it is searching the best lesson on the Battle of Lexington and Concord from teachers who live down the road, or offering a geospatial technology institute near your in-laws, don’t be confined by the borders of Colorado. Check out the Alliance Network website. This summer there may still be openings in institutes as diverse as Nitty Gritty City in Oklahoma, Forestry Institute for Teachers in North Dakota, and a Summer Geography Alliance Institute in South Carolina.

<http://alliances.nationalgeographic.com/index.php>

Geographic Bee / Science Fair / History Day Winners

Pranit Nanda, a 6th grader from Aurora Quest K-8 School won the 2012 **Colorado Geographic Bee** hosted by the University of Denver. Pranit received a cash prize of \$100, a \$7,500 scholarship to the University of Denver, and a trip to Washington, D.C. where he will represent Colorado in the National Finals at National Geographic Headquarters, May 22-24. Pranit was the 2nd place winner in the 2011 Colorado Geographic Bee. The winning question: What body of water connects the Gulf of Oman with the Persian Gulf?



Recognizing that geography is not an isolated discipline, the Colorado Geographic Alliance celebrates the achievements of students across a wide variety of activities. Thanks to all the students and teachers who submitted projects related to geography!

At the **Colorado Science and Engineering Fair**, Isabella Soehn, a junior from Boulder High School mentored by Dr. John Cassano, won the Senior Price with her study – *A Wind Field Study Comparing Five Automatic Weather Stations on the Antarctic Ross Ice Shelf*. Fort Collins eighth grader Chris Alleman won the junior price for *What's Up with the Poudre?* Chris attends Kinard Middle School and was supported by Mr. Mike Allerman.

Colorado History Day winners for the best use of geography in a project at the junior level went to a documentary entitled *Railroad Through the*



Rockies by Christian Duran, Adrian Herrera and Irene Holmes from Pueblo School for the Arts and Sciences, sponsored by Nathan Marsh. The senior division award was won by Nathan Barrett and Alex Schlegel from Gunnison High School. Their teacher, Susan Barrett, guided them in their performance of *The Revolution of Barbed Wire: Get the Point!*



Geography Awareness Week

Geography Awareness Week is scheduled for November 11-17, 2012. ***Geography: Declare Your Interdependence!*** will help students, educators, families and community members understand the nature of the interdependent world they live in, and the roles they should (and shouldn't) play. From mapping a "global closet", to understanding the effects of disruption to the movement of goods and services, students, parents, and educators will learn new ways of finding and sharing their global footprint, and the ways in which the decisions we all make every day can have far reaching consequences all over the world. This year's program will show how the ideas of interdependence, interconnectedness, and geographic perspectives can be easily incorporated into all parts of the classroom, after-school program, or at home.

COGA Leadership Council Takes Shape

by Sophia Linn, Chair, COGA Strategic Planning Committee; Acting Chair, COGA Leadership Council; Assistant Director, Geospatial Centroid, Colorado State University

Under the guidance and prompting of National Geographic, over the past year COGA has been deeply involved with a strategic planning process. It has been a thoughtful and inspiring journey, and the new directions that have been articulated as a result of this process will put COGA on a solid path towards influencing the future of geography education in Colorado. Part of the strategic plan dictates the establishment of a Leadership Council-- a body of dedicated individuals from across the educational and geographic spectrum who will help guide COGA management, participate in decision making, and lead committees that will take on various initiatives. The first meeting of the COGA Leadership Council took place on April 9, 2012, with seven council members physically present and four calling in.

While much will still evolve over the coming months, this first meeting succeeded in establishing a number of committees and task forces that will launch a new wave of COGA activities. First, a Finance/Personnel Committee was established to address the immediate financial needs of COGA as well as to serve as a liaison to the National Geographic Education Foundation -- the primary funder of COGA. Second, a task force was formed to assist with COGA's participation in the BioBlitz event scheduled for August 25-26. The intention is for this Task Force to eventually evolve into an Education and/or Outreach Committee. Finally, in preparation for the 2013 National Council for Geography Education Conference which will be held in Denver, a Local Arrangements Committee is beginning to organize. (Additional assistance is welcome!) By creating a number of committees and task forces, as well as the Leadership Council itself, COGA is striving to establish a shared leadership model that will encourage both greater involvement from its membership as well as provide greater insight and guidance from constituents across the state.

As chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, and acting chair of the newly-formed Leadership Council, I have been honored and inspired by working with such a dedicated, smart, creative, and really fun group of people. The energy and 'zest' they have for both geography and education is truly awesome -- in the truest sense of the word. Although I plan to step down as chair before the start of the next school year, I look forward to my continued association with COGA and believe that the organization is on an excellent path towards the future.

Welcome to the Colorado Geographic Alliance Administrator

Josh Hendrickson recently completed his BA in Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs and is continuing on in the Masters' program at UCCS where he will be working with Assistant Professor David Havlick on sustainability issues. Josh grew up in Iowa and moved to Colorado Springs after falling in love with the Garden of the Gods. He loves food of all kinds, and it was this passion for different cultural foods and the reasons why people eat the things they do that initially sparked his interest in geography. His graduate work will focus on using GIS to help understand issues of food sustainability and security. When Josh isn't working or studying, he is busy exploring the quality ingredients at one of the local farmers' markets, cooking, reading, or hiking the trails around Colorado Springs with his partner and their two dogs -- a Jindo named Nikko and an Akita/Aussie named Zephurum. In addition to staffing workshops and serving as the Geography Awareness Week Coordinator, Josh will be moving the Colorado Geographic Alliance communications toward the 21st century, so look for spiffy updates of the website and even some social media opportunities. We are delighted to have Josh on the team!



Congratulations to Sally High, Presidential Scholar

Sally High, Social Studies teacher at Pagosa Springs Middle School, has been awarded the Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators. Sally is recognized for using Colorado Geography Standards and new Social Studies Standards to embed environmental education in the experiences of her students. She has led numerous educational excursions, including trips to Chaco Canyon, Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Park, and Bandelier National Monument, as well as modern Hopi, Ute and Navajo Reservations. She teaches elective classes in Clean Energy and Sustainability, and Greenhouse Gardening. She serves on the board of the educational nonprofit Geothermal Greenhouse Partnership and recently presented at the Colorado Alliance of Environmental Educators. Sally will present at the National Council for the Social Studies, Environment and Sustainability Community, at the November 2012 Conference in Seattle.



\$2.5 Million Approved for Development of Social Studies Assessments

On December 10, 2009, the Colorado State Board of Education formally adopted new standards that detailed the broad themes, ideas and concepts that the state expects students to learn, experience and demonstrate for postsecondary success. These academic standards include grade level expectations that students must master; content and skills acquired in elementary schools support learning at the secondary levels. On November 29, 2010, the Colorado State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission of Higher Education agreed on a comprehensive assessment system that would, for the first time in the state of Colorado, measure social studies once in elementary, middle, and high school as part of a summative assessment system for accountability. On December 6, 2010, the State Board of Education unanimously approved requirements for a new state assessment system. The next challenge was to provide funding for development and implementation of the assessments, which must be approved by the Colorado State Legislature.

Education News Colorado reporter Todd Engdahl wrote on May 1st, 2012 “Testing has been a nagging issue throughout the 2012 session. The board last fall requested \$26 million to develop a full battery of new state tests to replace the CSAPs, which are obsolete because of new state content standards. The Hickenlooper administration proposed no funding. The Joint Budget Committee fussed over the issue for months, with members complaining about mixed signals from the board, the governor’s office and the House and Senate education committees. The legislature finally decided to provide only some \$6 million for development of new social studies and science tests, plus Spanish language and special education tests.” For more information about the legislative session, and an update on the discussion about this topic, visit <http://www.ednewscolorado.org/2012/05/01/37673-testing-bill-passes-easy-floor-vote>.

Bottom line – it appears that Colorado will eventually have a social studies summative assessment as part of the replacement system for the CSAPs.

“What is Geo-literacy?” Check out these videos from National Geographic, featuring former Colorado State Social Studies Specialist Brenda Barr

The National Geographic Education Foundation has been working for over a quarter century to ensure that geography education has a strong place in elementary and secondary schools in the United States. As part of the Colorado Geographic Alliance, you, too, are involved in the effort toward encouraging geo-literacy. There is still much to be done. Three components of geo-literacy are: understanding of human and natural systems, geographic reasoning, and systematic decision-making. Watch and listen to these videos for a big-picture explanation of how to explain geo-literacy (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pb8yenSogzE>) and “Why is Geo-literacy important?” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTUG13RCz9A&feature=relmfu>). http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/geoliteracy/?ar_a=1



Understanding Earth: GIS Technology Drives a New Relationship Between Humans and the Environment

COGA Leadership Council member, past NCGE president, and Esri Education Manager Joseph Kerski reminds us, for our ancestors, geographic knowledge was crucial for survival. For our own survival today, geographic knowledge plays an equally important role. GIS technology drives a new relationship between humans and the environment, leading to a better understanding of our Earth. Investigate this new resource from Esri, available for download at no cost.

<http://www.esri.com/library/ebooks/understanding-earth.pdf>

Global Connections Resources

Looking for resources on global connections?

Check out My Community, Our Earth, which was created in the year 2002 through public and private partnerships, in preparation for the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa, to address sustainable development issues, including biodiversity, climate change, poverty eradication, fresh water supply, and urbanization. This partnership approaches the theme of sustainable development using a geographic perspective that allows innovative responses to local community challenges.

<http://www.aag.org/gce>



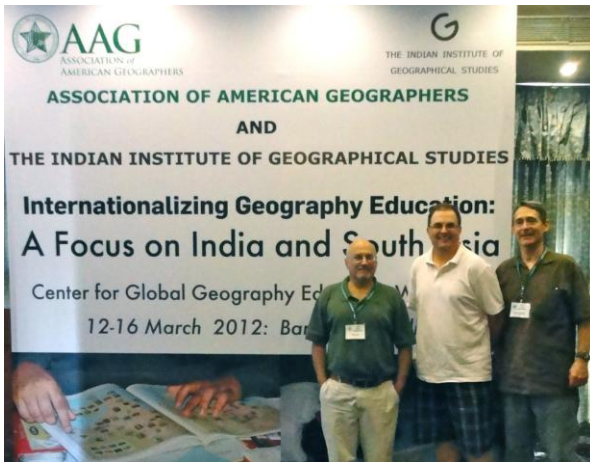
MY Community, Our Earth

Professional Development Opportunities in Your District or School

Recognizing that multiple activities compete for teachers' time, the Colorado Geographic Alliance is focused on meeting needs of teachers in their schools and districts. Looking for clarification of the revised geography standards? Would you be interested in a presentation on how to incorporate census data into your classroom? Do teachers in your school want to learn how to spread geospatial technology across the curriculum, from using GeoLit Trips to community mapping to examining trends in the population? Contact coga@uccs.edu or call 719-255-5217 to have a conversation about how we might find a geography expert to address your needs.

Three Colorado geographers participate in the Association of American Geographer's Center for Global Geography Education (CGGE) workshop in Bangalore, India

Bangalore, the Silicon Valley of India and home to numerous information technology companies, was a perfect host city for the CGGE workshop. The task was to bring a group of teachers and professors from the United States and South Asia together to collaboratively create new geographic case studies that would support the needs of higher education and AP Human Geography teachers across the world. Each module consists of a content-based case study that supports a global learning approach to geography and presents various geographic issues occurring in South Asia.



The thirty participants were from four different countries and fourteen different US States. Colorado was well represented within the group with David Palmer (Eaglecrest High School), Rick Gindele (Cherry Creek High School) and Phil Klein (University of Northern Colorado). The workshop agenda included a few days of field studies in and around Bangalore (Bengaluru officially) in the southern Indian state of Karnataka followed by three days of creating the case studies and collaborative projects. Bangalore is India's third largest city with a population of nearly nine million and is one of India's fastest growing cities (Census of India). It is also home to an information technology growth pole made so famous in Friedman's book *The World Is Flat*. Participants visited the

technological office parks that ring the city, visited an Infosys back office processing campus, numerous cultural sites and navigated the omnipresent traffic of Bangalore. David Palmer commented, "The contrasts of economic development in India are so dramatic. We were able to witness first-hand the emergence of a country working its way from a primarily agrarian society to an advanced capitalistic economy with rapidly growing manufacturing and high skilled information economy. It was amazing to see first-hand the concepts I teach in my classes."

The case studies, still in development, are designed to capture some of these dramatic changes occurring in South Asia and present them in a meaningful format that directly assists higher education and AP teachers. The lessons will be found at <http://globalgeography.aag.org>.



Colorado Council for the Social Studies hosts Wyoming Geographic Alliance

Several teachers from the Wyoming Geographic Alliance came south to share National Geographic's Giant Traveling Map of South America at the Colorado Council for the Social Studies Conference in April 2012. Yes, it's a GIANT map that takes up as much space as a school gym! Thanks to the great staff at the Doubletree Hotel at the Tech Center, not only did the attendees at the conference get to explore the map and its resources, but hotel staff and guests coming in to register gained a whole new perspective on a continent. If you are interested in hosting a giant map in your school or district, visit the special events page on the COGA website to learn about the process for choosing a map and how the Colorado Geographic Alliance can help pay for the rental fee. Starting in the fall of 2012, a new giant map of Europe will be available to borrow as well.

<http://www.uccs.edu/coga/news-and-events/special-events.html>



And, if you have not yet seen the story about the visit of the Giant Traveling Map of Asia on the Western Slope, visit COGA's home page at <http://www.uccs.edu/~coga/> to see the video from the KREX newsroom.



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