

DIG IT

Volume 30, Summer 2025

DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

Annual Alumni and Friends Newsletter



University of Wisconsin
Eau Claire

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Editors: Lorilie Steinke and Kent M. Syverson

Phone: 715.836.3732 | Fax: 715.836.5627

Letter from the chair	2	Student Research Day	13
Field Trip/Field camp updates	3 - 4	Internships	14 - 15
Responsible Mining Initiative Update	5	Earth Science Seminar Series	16
Geology/RMI Advisory Board	6	Faculty and Staff News	16 - 19
Awards	7	Congrats, Grads!	20
Spanning the Globe.....	8 - 9	Alumni News	21 - 23
Scholarships	10 - 11	Sponsorships	25
2025 Geology Banquet.....	12	Donations	26

Cover image: Students along Lake Superior near Schreiber, Ontario, Oct. 2024. Part of an NSF-funded field excursion to study Precambrian volcanic rocks (this site has a series of Archean pillow lavas).

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR 2025



Greetings Everyone!

This year's Dig It is full of major staffing changes, new scholarships, a new field course, and impressive accomplishments by students and faculty.

This past fall, we successfully hired a tenure-track environmental geochemist, Zach Meyers (Ph.D. 2020). Zach is a field hydrologist who uses geochemical tools to investigate research questions focused on groundwater, groundwater-surface water interactions, and water quality. His research area will compliment Sarah's and give us an incredibly strong hydrogeology and water chemistry program. Tadesse Alemu (Ph.D. 2019) just completed his first year as an Assistant Professor, and he has been working hard on his courses and starting his UWEC research program. We will see great things coming from his research group. Most campuses across the country are under financial strain, and UWEC isn't exempt. That is why we are especially grateful to the university's upper administration who supported both of our recent search requests. These two hires will help us maintain a vibrant department well into the future! While Sarah was on a sabbatical this past year, Liza Bednarek Wernicke (Ph.D. 2024) stepped in as an adjunct professor.

Liza did an outstanding job of teaching Environmental Geology and Hydrogeology I. We are sorry we could only have her here for one year, and we wish her the best. A major staffing change occurred at the end of the spring semester when Lorilie Steinke retired. Lorilie has been working on campus for 35 years, and she has been our Department Assistant since 2006. I can't overstate how valued Lorilie has been as a colleague or how important her work ethic and knowledge base were for everyone in the department. I am happy for her, but I will miss her. Lorilie, have a long and happy retirement!

Through generous donations we were able to award multiple new scholarships this year. Sam Helmuth's family made a generous donation to endow two memorial scholarships; one will be awarded to an incoming freshman starting next year, and another was awarded this spring to Natalie Krebs who will be taking MinPet I in the fall. The other new scholarships are the eponymous Source Energy Services Responsible Mining Scholarship, and the renewable Pathfinder Geology and Environmental Science Scholarship funded by Kevin and Margery Martindale. We announced awards of \$32,857 in grants and \$23,950 in scholarships at our annual spring banquet! These grants and scholarships are only possible through the generous donations of alumni, friends, and emeritus faculty. We are sincerely grateful for all the support.

This summer was the first offering of our new Field Hydrology course. This three-week course was a natural extension of the two-week Freshwater Collaborative course Sarah had been running with colleagues from UW-Stout and UW-River Falls. Her collaborators remain involved in this course that provides our Geology-Hydrogeology and Geology-Environmental Science majors with a field course preparing them to truly stand out when they apply for environmental jobs.

Our student-faculty collaborative research



Field Camp II, Montana

presentations were well received at the on-campus Celebration of Research and Creative Activity (CERCA). We had 24 majors and minors who presented 20 research posters. Our students presented at two professional conferences: the Wisconsin section of the American Water Resources Association (AWRA) meeting and the Institute on Lake Superior Geology (ILSG) meeting, with Lyndsie Vickers winning the best poster award for the second year in a row at ILSG. Also of note, two students won prestigious STEM scholarships from the UWEC College of Arts and Sciences. These are competitive scholarships for which the STEM departments nominate their best and brightest. Beyond students getting recognition for their work, Rob Lodge received the 2025 UW-Eau Claire ORSP Excellence in Mentoring in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity Award.

While drafting the chair's update, I examined past issues of the Dig It, and I want to give a special shout out to Kent. He arrived on campus in 1992. In his second year on campus, he restarted a long-dormant department newsletter. Since then, Kent has edited and driven every one of the 32 annual department newsletters! Over those years, he has been assisted by the dedicated work of Wanda Schulner ('94-'95), Nancy Amdahl ('95-'05), and Lorilie Steinke ('06-'25). Our newsletter became the Dig It in 2003, and in 2016, it went to the next level with vivid color photos throughout. Having been a student in three geology departments at flagship state universities, and receiving their newsletters year after year, I can confidently state that our Dig It is a newsletter that rivals and, indeed, exceeds newsletters from much larger departments. Thank you, Kent. And thank you to all our alumni and friends who stay engaged with the department by keeping us updated on your lives, visiting us when you're back in town, and supporting our mission to produce the best future geoscientists that we can.

Scott Clark
Professor and Chair

GEOL 312 FIELD TRIPS

By Phillip Ihinger

Field-based education is central to the ethos of our Geology and Environmental Science program at UWEC. Our goal is to acclimate students to field work at the outset, beginning with multiple field excursions in introductory courses. The 'learning by doing' approach to field geology quickly ramps up during the first 300-level course required for all our majors: MinPet I. We develop field skills through rock and mineral identification in real-world contexts so students understand the geologic processes shaping our planet. This involves leaving the comforts of dorm rooms and dining halls, grabbing hand lenses and sleeping bags, and piling into stuffed Suburbans to explore faraway destinations with awesome rock exposure.

We fulfill this mission by leading our sophomore majors on two extended field trips: 1) a 4-day, 3-night trip to northern Wisconsin and Michigan's UP; and 2) a 5-day, 4-night trip to the Black Hills of South Dakota. These field experiences introduce students to igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary processes in their contexts as nature presents them to us. Alumni will agree: these trips are epic. Students see gorgeous, ideal examples of all the common rock types in their real-world contexts, and they also learn how to conduct themselves in the field. Perhaps most importantly, these trips bring our students together as a cohesive unit. Friends for life are made on these trips.

Throughout most of his lengthy career, Dr. Bob Hooper led these valuable field experiences. His retirement left many massive holes in our program, but the tradition of providing valuable instruction in the field in MinPet will continue. I am honored to fill Bob's big shoes teaching MinPet. This past October, I led a group of 22 MinPet I students (with two student assistants; (Samantha Mitchell '25 and Renee Jeutter '26) to northern Wisconsin to explore the geology of the



Happy MinPet I students on the fall 2024 field trip to UP Michigan.



MinPet I students at Copper Falls (fall 2024 field trip to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan).



MinPet II students at Little Devils Tower, SD, April 2025.

Midcontinent Rift. We examined the older Precambrian rocks through which the massive flood basalts penetrated (Archean granite, Tyler formation, BIF), the many phases of rift magmatism (the Keweenaw flood basalts and associated rhyolites and the Mineral Lake Intrusive complex gabbros and granites), and the Montreal River Monocline basin sediments at Potato River Falls and along the Lake Superior shoreline. We stayed in the isolated Beaver Creek campground and experienced only one weather event during the entire trip: a brief, violent thunderstorm that blew through our camp during one dinner. Apart from a small incident with a trailer hitch, the trip could not have gone any better!

In the spring, I took 17 MinPet-II students and two TAs to the Black Hills. On the drive out, we toured Badlands National Park to introduce the enigmatic Cenozoic magmatism associated with the Laramide orogeny, which we studied throughout our field trip. Park Ranger Ed Welsh, an expert on the volcanoclastic sediments of the White River Group, showed us spectacular intact giant turtle fossils in the Brule Formation. We also studied the

Precambrian metamorphic rocks overlying the Harney Peak granite, hiked the Little Devils Tower trail (all students made it to the peak!), and studied diatremes in and around Lead. Zach Grima, Exploration Manager for Iris Metals, kindly let us into the Etta Pegmatite lithium quarry. You may remember the room-sized spodumene crystals lining the walls of this quarry. Sadly, it had been >20 years since our UWEC classes were allowed access to this quarry-- I was excited to see the exposure again, and it did not disappoint. We used the South Sheridan Lake Campground as our base for the entire trip. The weather throughout the trip was perfect: mid 60s during the day, upper 30s in the night, and not a drop of rain the entire trip. Also, we did not experience a single vehicle issue... If only I could find a way to bottle THAT good luck for future MinPet trips!

*"We saw giant turtle fossils
in the Brule Formation"*

FIELD CAMP I UPDATE – NEW MEXICO

By Scott Clark

This year we had twenty-three students at Field Camp I. That is just one student shy of our capacity, and they were a great group of students! For the instructional team, I was joined by our new sedimentologist, Tadesse Alemu, who was introduced to the first half of field camp, Bob and Ginger Hooper, with Bob coming out of his retirement for another

tour of southern New Mexico, and two very helpful and dependable teaching assistants – Haley Johannesen '25 and Cate Blair '25. Field camp went about as one would expect with lots of hiking, learning in the field, good food, and decent weather. This was the 27th consecutive year UWEC students have had their first three weeks of field camp in New

Mexico. For each of those years, we've had warm hospitality from Catherine Wanek at the Black Range Lodge, and generous access to private lands. We are grateful to the Sterling family, Gene and Barbara Thornton, and Leedrue and Sandy Hyatt for opening their lands to us.



Field Camp I students in New Mexico, January 2025.



Field Camp I students mapping in New Mexico, January 2025

FIELD CAMP II UPDATE – MONTANA

By Robert Lodge

Field Camp II in beautiful southwestern Montana was great this year, as always. Instructors Robert Lodge and Tadesse Alemu brought a brave and determined group of 14 students to the mountains for their capstone, and they didn't disappoint. The weather steadily warmed from the low 50's when we arrived to the 90's by the end, and there was no rain or other weather drama at all. We got through all the exercises quickly and it is hard to believe it went so fast. The teaching assistant, Haley Johannesen, was once again excellent and proved every moment of the camp that she deserved to be back helping students for a second time.

We once again visited Yellowstone National Park where students saw spectacular volcanic deposits, geothermal features, and hydrothermally altered rocks. We went on a cave tour at the Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park. We also had another amazing tour of the Continental Cu-Mo mine in Butte. Oh yeah - students did an excellent job recognizing the complex structural geology of our field areas.

Scott and Jody continue to renovate and improve the Iron Wheel Ranch, and it feels shameful to put a bunch of sweaty and dirty geologists in there. It is a privilege to call the Iron Wheel Guest Ranch our base for Field Camp II. Students have a clean,

comfortable, and welcoming space to work on assignments. Visits from Jody's dog, Belle, were always welcomed. And Jody still sends us off with a final meal consisting of smoked ribeye roast that is legendary amongst the generations of students since 2018 when they took over the business. Overall, a great time was had by all, and I am looking forward to bringing a new group to Montana next year.



Field Camp II student crew, Montana, June 2024.

"Jody still sends us off with a final meal consisting of smoked ribeye roast that is legendary amongst the generations of students since 2018"

RESPONSIBLE MINING INITIATIVE UPDATE

By Kent Syverson

Our department has been intentional about bringing our students together with companies and agencies who hire summer interns. During the 2013-14 academic year, our department was awarded a two-year, \$451,000 UW System Economic Development Incentive Grant for a Responsible Mining Initiative (RMI). This RMI grant provided funds for setting up an economic geology lab, scholarships, leading workshops for high school science teachers, and connecting with industry partners to provide internship opportunities for our students.

We accomplished our goals, and as far as the internship program has fared, the impact of

the RMI grant cannot be overstated. Between 1968 and 2013, our students had been hired for ~10 internships, in total. Since 2014, our students have worked in 223 paid internships! The cumulative salaries our students have earned in these internships are amazing. With an approximate average summer salary of just under \$8,000, our students have earned over \$1.76 million in those 22 internships (with 15 interns in 2025)! We also announced \$52,450 in scholarships and grants to students at the spring Geology banquet (up from \$2500 in 2013). Without a doubt, the state's initial investment in our program has benefited our students well beyond expectations, thanks to our Advisory Board (see separate article) and all other partners with the Responsible Mining Initiative!

The Responsible Mining Initiative provides amazing opportunities for our students and prepares highly qualified graduates for work in the mining industry, the environmental consulting industry, and in regulatory agencies such as the DNR. Scholarships and grants reduce student debt. Internships provide a valuable window to the working world. When internships and scholarships/grants are added to field experiences and our strong collaborative research program, the department is offering an undergraduate education unavailable at other universities. This is preparing our STEM graduates for the workforce and graduate school. If your company might want to partner with the RMI through an internship, donation, or speaker, please contact Kent Syverson.



Claire Schoenemann '25, a 2024 environmental intern with Foth in DePere, WI. Claire was hired to a full-time position with Foth prior to graduation.



Sara Scott '25, a 2024 environmental intern with U.S. Silica in Ottawa, IL, posing with her supervisor, Blugold Todd Lindblad '13. Sara was hired into a full-time position with U.S. Silica prior to graduation. Photo courtesy of U.S. Silica.

TWO STUDENTS ATTEND FRAC SAND CONFERENCE IN SAN ANTONIO, TX

By Kent Syverson

Kent Syverson and two UWEC Responsible Mining Initiative (RMI) students attended the 13th Annual Frac Sand Supply & Logistics Conference in San Antonio, TX, Nov. 18-20, 2024. Students Sara Scott (Grand Rapids, MN, US Silica intern, and now working full time with US Silica) and Lyndsie Vickers (Alva, OK, and Talon Metals intern) helped the meeting organizer, Mr. Nick Cook, with meeting setup and logistics in return for free meeting registration. The students' air transportation and lodging at the conference venue, the Hyatt Regency Hill Country Resort, were made possible by generous donors to the Internship Advancement-Geology fund (#2780). Thanks to Nick Cook, Pete Cook, the Petroleum Connection, and Blugold alumni for sponsoring the RMI students!



Lyndsie Vickers (L) and Sara Scott (R)

10TH ANNUAL GEOLOGY/RMI ADVISORY BOARD MEETING HELD

By Kent Syverson

The 10th Annual UWEC Geology and Environmental Science/Responsible Mining Initiative Advisory Board meeting was held on May 13, 2025. We met in Davies Center in a room overlooking the new science building construction site! We met face-to-face and three members Zoomed into the 4.5-hr meeting. Thirteen outside stakeholders (including nine alumni) joined us from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Idaho, and Canada. The major discussion was maximizing student preparation for field camp, and we received valuable input. Most undergraduate Geology programs do not have an advisory board, and this is a major value-added for our students and our program (including students presenting research to board members).

We thank the professionals who attended the Advisory Board meeting. Participating in the meeting required valuable time from our stakeholders, so we are grateful for their investment in our program. Participants included Audrey Boerner (Eau Claire City-County Health, '11), Carter Boswell (Covia, '18), Mark Ciardelli (Foth, '04), Bryan Hardel (Big Rock Exploration, '09), Breck Johnson (Oxy, '04), Dale Kerner (Integra Resources, '96), Mark Kiessling ('95, Newmont Mining Corp.), Todd Lindblad (US Silica, '13), Vince Matthews (State Geologist of Colorado, Emeritus), Tina Pint (Barr Engineering, '99), Bob Servais (Milestone Materials, '04), Sue Swanson (State Geologist, WGNHS), and Roberta Walls (WDNR).



Future home of the UWEC Geology & Environmental Science Dept. starting in fall 2027!
Taken from live-action camera on 7/7/25.

LORILIE STEINKE RETIRES

By Kent Syverson

Lorilie Steinke, our Departmental Associate since 2006, decided to retire in May 2025. Lorilie has 'run the show' in an efficient and effective manner while taking care of vehicles, completing expense reports, watching budgets, preparing newsletters, assisting the chair, helping students with questions, etc. Yikes!!! How do you replace someone like that? We will miss her tremendously, but she deserves to spend more time with grandchildren and other pastimes! Thanks, Lorilie, for serving our department so well. Happy Retirement!



Lorilie with a gift to remind her of her "favorite" part of the job – vehicles!

STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN NSF-FUNDED FIELD EXCURSIONS TO ARGENTINA AND CANADA

UWEC Geology majors participated in two valuable field experiences funded by an NSF research grant entitled "Collaborative Research: The Permo-Triassic Choiyoi Silicic Large Igneous Province: Regional Volcanic Framework and Potential Impact on Global Climate" (PI David Kimbrough, San Diego State Univ.). Blugold students Ty Sagedal and Bekah Thompson spent 2.5 weeks in Argentina studying the Choiyoi magmatic province and its potential impact on Permo-Triassic climate. In addition, Dr. Robert Lodge ran a five-day, NSF-funded field trip to study Archean volcanic rocks in the Thunder Bay region of Canada in mid-October 2024. Two SDSU and four UWEC Geology majors participated in this field trip (Sagedal, Thompson, Natalie Engh, and Aidan Kwiatkowski).



Rebekah Thompson and Ty Sagedal at their field area in Argentina.

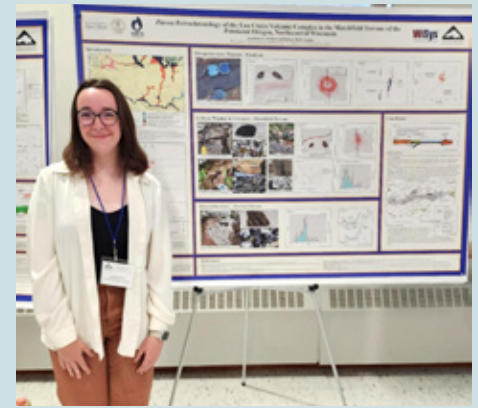


Rob Lodge with his field trip students from UWEC and SDSU at the amethyst mine in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

ALUMNI, CONTINUING STUDENTS, AND FRIENDS RECEIVE AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS

Alumni, current students, and “adopted” Blugold geologists continue to be recognized for their achievements. This is evidence of the quality of our students, alumni, and program. We are aware of the following awards/achievements—congratulations to all!

- Lyndsie Vickers x’26 won the Best Undergraduate Student Poster Award (for the second time in a row!) at the Institute of Lake Superior Geology Annual Meeting in May 2025 (supervisor Robert Lodge). See UWEC news story about Lyndsie journey from Oklahoma into our department <https://tinyurl.com/yc62dnrf>
- Geology major Wyatt Draves (Neenah) x’26 was awarded the College of Arts and Sciences’ William and Marion Lieske Memorial Scholarship (\$4300) for 2025-26.
- Geology major Madison Shepard (Alsip, IL) x’26 was awarded the College of Arts and Sciences’ Michael F. Fredrich Scholarship (\$3000) for 2025-26.
- Dr. Merilie Reynolds (Adjunct Instructor in our department in 2020 and daughter of Karen Havholm) was awarded 2025 William Harvey Gross Medal by the Mineral Deposits Division of the Geological Association of Canada, <https://mddgac.org/william-harvey-gross-medal/>.
- Dr. Vince Matthews (UWEC Geology & Environmental Science Advisory Board member and Adjunct Instructor in the department in 2022) was presented the 2024 Outstanding Scientist Award by the Rocky Mountain Association of Geologists. His recent book, *Land of Ice*, is a Colorado Book Awards finalist in Guidance and Exploration.
- Recent alumna Abby Norstad ’24 (Pine Island, MN) received a NOAA Ocean Mapping Internship. She boarded the NOAA ship Okeanos Explorer in Hilo, Hawaii, on 9/14/24 for the 26-day research cruise EX2406. Abby and two other paid interns (selected from 930 applicants!) used ArcGIS to process/evaluate SONAR and ROV data.



Lyndsie Vickers with her award-winning ILSG poster



NOAA intern Abby Norstad boarding the research vessel in Hawaii. Image courtesy of NOAA Ocean Exploration, *Beyond the Blue: Johnston Atoll Mapping*.

ROB LODGE WINS EXCELLENCE IN MENTORING IN RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY AWARD

Dr. Robert Lodge received the 2025 UWEC Excellence in Mentoring in Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity Award. He is an expert in volcanogenic massive sulfide (VMS) deposits, and many of his students have been studying VMS deposits in Wisconsin. Since he arrived at UWEC in 2014, he has worked with numerous research students on Precambrian geology. Many of his students have presented their research at regional and international conferences. His research students appreciate Dr. Lodge's investment in their collaborative research experiences. Congratulations, Rob!!



Chancellor Schmidt presents Rob Lodge with research mentoring award

NEW FIELD HYDROLOGY COURSE AT UWEC

By Sarah Vitale

Our first three-week offering of Field Hydrology was a resounding success. Instructors from UWEC, UW-Stout, UW-River Falls, and UW-Oshkosh worked together to create a full experience for the students, far beyond what students learn through traditional coursework. This field course is currently funded by the Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin, which pays for all course operating expenses and provides scholarships to students to offset some tuition costs based on financial need. We had 11 students enrolled this year, including six Blugolds, and Cate Blair '25 was my TA. Students included geology, environmental geography, environmental science, and biology majors from UWEC, Stout, and UWRF.

Our study sites between River Falls and Fall Creek helped students evaluate how geology and humans impact hydrologic conditions in western Wisconsin. Students completed projects related to surface water-groundwater interaction, groundwater flow, surface and groundwater quality, aquatic ecological impacts from restoration efforts, and wetland delineation. We had a couple days of cold, rainy weather, but this created an excellent opportunity to

observe hydrologic changes related to weather, particularly in detecting surface-water vs. groundwater-dominant flows through a stream channel.

Although I've offered this as a two-week field course since 2022, the addition of the third week has given us the space to settle into topics and build a stronger foundation of field hydrology skills. The third week also provides time for students to reinforce their learning and skills by developing and carrying out an independent project, for which they write a final report.

I'm looking forward to my continued collaboration with my co-instructors and training future crops of freshwater students!



Students studying surface-water hydrology, Hydrology Field Course summer 2025, Eau Claire.

SPANNING THE GLOBE!



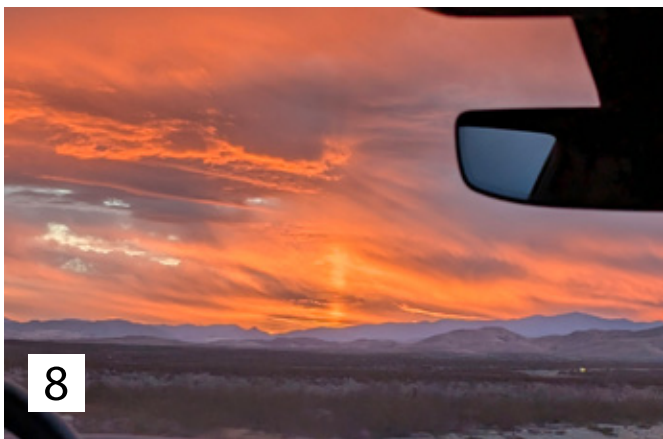
1. *Economic Geology field trip to Duluth, fall 2024.*
2. *Playing in the mud, Hydrology Field Course summer 2025, Eau Claire.*
3. *Waiting for the Field Camp II tour of the Continental Cu-Mo Mine, Butte, MT.*
4. *Intern Abby Norstad's "office" during her three-week internship -- NOAA's ship Okeanos Explorer. Image courtesy of Art Howard, Global Foundation for Ocean Exploration.*
5. *Field Camp II students at Yellowstone National Park, May 2025.*



6



7



8



9



10



11

6. Students cruising to map outcrops along reservoir in Argentina, July 2024.
7. We have to go up there?! Field Camp I students, New Mexico, Jan. 2025.
8. On the road during a Field Camp I sunset, New Mexico, Jan. 2025.
9. If only things were this straightforward at field camp... Earth History field trip, spring 2025.
10. Earth History field trip, Science Museum of Minnesota, April 2025.
11. International culture! Tim Hortons snack stop, NSF-funded geology field trip to Ontario, fall 2024.

SCHOLARSHIP CORNER

2025 FRESHMAN GEOLOGY SCHOLARSHIPS ANNOUNCED

Thanks to alumni and friends for funding merit-based, annual scholarships for high-potential incoming freshman who are majoring in Geology. This year four recipients were selected. Kayla Telshaw (Prior Lake, MN) received the new four-year, renewable \$2500 Pathfinder Geology Scholarship funded by Kevin '80 and Margery Martindale. Kevin and Margery are both originally from western Wisconsin, and Kevin was a geophysicist in the petroleum industry for many years until he retired.

Joseph Miller (Plymouth, MN) received the \$1000 Freshman Geology Promise scholarship funded by Curt and Laura Peck. Fintan McGovern (Appleton) and Wynn Wollermann (Union Grove) received the \$1000 Blugold Freshman Geology Scholarship funded by enthusiastic UWEC Geology and Environmental Science alumni. We look forward to their arrival on campus this fall!



Kevin Martindale, donor

DRAVES WINS BECKSTROM GEOLOGY MAJOR SCHOLARSHIP

This year's recipient of the Beckstrom Geology Major Scholarship is Wyatt Draves (Neenah). This \$1000 scholarship, established in fall 2005 by alumnus Greg Beckstrom ('84), is awarded annually to a comprehensive geology major who has completed MinPet I. The awardee must have an excellent academic record and outstanding performance in MinPet I. Thanks to Greg for his continued support of this scholarship.



Wyatt Draves

TWO JRC APPLIED GEOLOGY SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

The recipients of \$1000 JRC Applied Geology Scholarships are Samara Gries (Grafton, intern with Foth Environmental in Duluth, MN) and Ciara Pearson (Big Lake, MN, intern with Stantec in Minneapolis). Recipients must demonstrate an interest in applied geology careers.

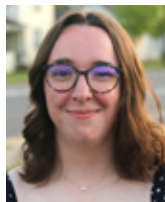
Josh Carlisle (UWEC Geol '02) established the JRC Applied Geology Scholarship. We thank Josh and several other generous alumni who donated this year to allow us to fund two scholarships.



Samara Gries (L) and Ciara Pearson (R)

VICKERS RECEIVES GEOLOGY FIELD CAMP II SCHOLARSHIP

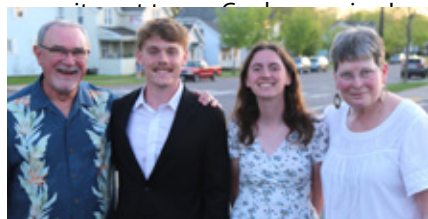
Nancy Haefer (GEOL minor, '69) has generously funded a \$1,000 Geology Field Camp II Scholarship. The scholarship is awarded to a geology major who will be participating in Field Camp II. Preference is given to a student who is considering grad school and might benefit most from Field Camp II given a student's interests. Lyndsie Vickers (Alva, OK) is the recipient of the 2025 Geology Field Camp II Scholarship. She will graduate in spring 2026.



Lyndsie Vickers

TWO SOPHOMORE GEOLOGY PROMISE SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

Curt (UWEC Geol '77) and Laura (UWEC '78) Peck donated money to establish the Sophomore Geology Promise Scholarship in spring 2021. Recipients must be geology majors enrolled in MinPet I in the fall and have an outstanding academic record. The recipients of \$1000 Sophomore Geology Promise Scholarships are Lucas Bunten (Pewaukee) and Alicia Merklein (Elkhart Lake). We appreciate Curt and Laura's



Lucas Bunten and Alicia Merklein with donors Curt and Laura Peck

BLUGOLD GEOLOGY ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

Thanks to the alumni who have funded a merit-based annual scholarship for Geology majors in our program. This

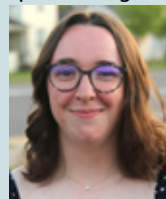
year a \$750 Blugold Geology Alumni Scholarship was awarded to Lucy Christman (Green Bay). This scholarship is funded by generous donations to the Geology and Environmental Science Advancement Fund (#279).



Lucy Christman

SOURCE ENERGY SERVICES RESPONSIBLE MINING SCHOLARSHIP (NEW) AWARDED

Source Energy Services established a new \$2000 annual scholarship to support students with an interest in a career in mining. This year the Source Energy Services Responsible Mining Scholarship was awarded to Lyndsie Vickers (Alva, OK). Source Energy Services is an oil service logistics company. The company operates sand mines in Barron and Trempealeau counties, Wisconsin, and sell this sand primarily in western Canada. We thank Source Energy Services for partnering with our program!



Lyndsie Vickers



FIRST SAMUEL L. HELMUTH MEMORIAL GEOLOGY SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

The family of Samuel Helmuth recently donated money to endow two scholarships in Sam's memory (one renewable scholarship for an incoming freshman and one scholarship for a rising sophomore). Sam Helmuth was a 2016 graduate of the UWEC Geology Dept. who conducted research with Dr. Robert Lodge and worked for the USGS in Idaho. He died in a tragic car accident in 2021. We are thankful Sam's family chose to honor Sam's memory in this way. The first recipient of the \$2000 Samuel L. Helmuth Memorial Geology Scholarship (sophomore level) is Natalie Krebs (Grayslake, IL).



Natalie Krebs with Sam's dad (and donor), Kevin Helmuth

TWO DAVID L. RISCH GEOLOGY RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

David Risch '78 of Katy, Texas, endowed a scholarship fund to reward student researchers in the department. Scholarship recipients must be comprehensive geology majors with outstanding academic records, have an established Geology/Env. Science research track record, and plan to continue their engagement in research at UWEC in the upcoming academic year. Recipients of \$1100 Risch Scholarships are Avery McKeown-Robbie (Naperville, IL) and Meg Walker (Lancaster, WI).

David received a BS in Geology and Physics at UWEC and an MS in Oceanography at Texas A&M. He began his 31-year career in the energy industry as an exploration geophysicist initially with Phillips Petroleum Co., then Schlumberger, and retired from BHP Petroleum in 2013. Thanks to David for endowing these scholarships!



Avery McKeown-Robbie (L) and Meg Walker (R)

TWO H2O WELL DRILLING & PUMP SERVICE GEOLOGY SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

Nolan (UWEC Geol '18) and Miranda (UWEC Nursing '19) Rodriguez established the H2O Well Drilling & Pump Service Geology Scholarship in 2019. Recipients must be non-freshman comprehensive geology majors with outstanding academic records. The recipients of the \$500 H2O Scholarships are Ellie Teien (Edina, MN) and Abrielle Van Dyck (Eau Claire).

Nolan received a BS in Geology's Environmental Science emphasis. He participated in an entrepreneurial capstone experience where he developed a business plan for a well drilling business. He now operates H2O Well Drilling & Pump Service. We thank Nolan and Miranda for their generosity!



Abrielle Van Dyck (L) and Ellie Teien (R) with donor Nolan Rodriguez

MYERS/WILLIS FIELD CAMP SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Field camp experiences have become increasingly expensive for students. The Myers/Willis Geology Field Camp Scholarship, established by the department in 2006, reduces the financial burden of field camp for excellent students. The scholarship also honors the contributions of Dr. Paul Myers and Dr. Ronald Willis, geology professors at UWEC who worked hard to establish a strong field component in our young geology program.

Ty Sagedal (Burlington) & Samara Gries (Grafton) are recipients of this year's Myers/Willis Geology Field Camp scholarships. Recipients were selected based on performance excellence at Field Camp I in New Mexico. Each student received \$500 to defray expenses for Field Camp II in Montana.

We encourage all alumni who have benefited from our field experiences over the years to contribute to this fund (#1633). In addition, this is a terrific way to honor Paul and Ron for their dedication to our field program! See page 26 for information about contributing to this important scholarship fund.



Ty Sagedal and Samara Gries

DR. JOHN R. BERGSTROM SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

Dr. John Bergstrom was one of the earliest faculty members to help establish the Dept. of Geology independent of the Geography Dept. He was an inspiration to many of our first students, and one of those former students, Sandy Chamberlain '68, established the Dr. John R. Bergstrom Scholarship in his honor. This year's recipient of the \$500 Bergstrom Scholarship is Madison Shepard (Alsip, IL). The scholarship recipient must be a Geology and Environmental Science major with financial need, junior or senior standing, and the guidelines express a preference for female student.

We thank Sandy Chamberlain for donating the funds to establish this scholarship! **We are actively seeking to raise the balance in the account so we can increase the amount of the scholarship.** If you wish to give a donation to honor Dr. Bergstrom or to support the scholarship's mission, a gift can be made to the Dr. John R. Bergstrom Scholarship fund (#2475).

RENEWABLE SCHOLARSHIPS

The department now has several four-year renewable scholarships. These scholarships play a valuable role in recruiting high-quality high school seniors and retaining them in our program.

Kate Krueger (Neenah) had her \$2000 Your Opportunity Scholarship renewed for a second year, and she will be in MinPet I this coming fall. This scholarship is funded by Curt '77 and Laura '78 Peck.

Ty Sagedal (Burlington) had his \$1000 Geology Opportunity Scholarship renewed for a fourth year. Ty plays varsity baseball for the Blugolds and participated in an NSF research project in Argentina during the summer of 2024. The Geology Opportunity Scholarship is funded by an anonymous friend of the department.



Kate Krueger with Laura and Curt Peck



Ty Sagedal



Madison Shepard with Sandy Chamberlain

2025 GEOLOGY BANQUET

The spring Geology banquet is a fun time to eat a fine meal, present awards, recognize graduating seniors, say goodbye to classmates after another year, and reminisce about field trips gone by! This year 100+ students, family members, faculty, and donors assembled on May 10th.



Donors to the department attended to meet their sponsored students



Graduating seniors celebrate at their last banquet – friends forever!

STUDENT RESEARCH DAY - SPRING 2025

The Thirty-First Annual UW-Eau Claire Student Research Day (now part of CERCA) was held April 23-24, 2025. This event showcases faculty/student collaborative research occurring on campus. The Geology and Environmental Science Department has been well represented throughout the years, and this year was no exception. All students noted below presented posters this year. We are very proud of our students!

Note: Students who presented posters at professional conferences are also indicated. Student travel to conferences was supported with money from the Geology Advancement Fund and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

Ellie Teien with Tadesse Alemu, "Sahara's Ancient Network of Drainages and Streams (SANDS): The Libyan Testimony."

Bekah Thompson with Robert Lodge, "Ni-Cu-PGE Mineralization of the Mineral Lake Intrusive Complex, northern Wisconsin." Presented at the 71st Annual Institute on Lake Superior Geology [ILSG] conference, May 15-16, 2025, in Mountain Iron, MN.

Lyndsie Vickers with Robert Lodge, "U/Pb Geochronology of the Eau Claire Volcanic Complex, Northcentral Wisconsin." Presented at the 71st Annual Institute on Lake Superior Geology [ILSG] conference, May 15-16, 2025, in Mountain Iron, MN. Won ILSG "Best Student Presentation" award.

Catherine Blair and Meg Walker with Laura Suppes and Sarah Vitale, "An Evaluation of Drinking Water Quality in Rural Eau Claire County." Presented at the Wisconsin AWRA meeting, April 10-11, 2025, in the Wisconsin Dells.

Natalie Engh, Avery McKeown-Robbie and Claire Schoenemann with Laura Suppes and Sarah Vitale, "Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) in Drinking Water in Rural Eau Claire County." Presented at the Wisconsin AWRA meeting, April 10-11, 2025, in the Wisconsin Dells.

Libby Nelson and Alicia Merklein with Scott Clark, "Audit of Solid Waste in Eau Claire Municipal Sewage."

Samantha Mitchell with Phillip Ihinger, "Visualization of Electron Dynamics."

Dayne VanderMause and Bryce Yeo with Tadesse Alemu, "Megalake Chad: New Insights from Topographic Data."

Dayne VanderMause and Bryce Yeo with Tadesse Alemu, "Sahara's Ancient Network of Drainages and Streams (SANDS): The case of the Nile River in Sudan."

Kenny Walter with Robert Lodge, "Gold Mineralization at the Atlas Gold Mine, Western MT."

Aidan Kwiatkowski with Robert Lodge, "Petrochronology of Wisconsin's Volcanogenic Massive Sulfide Deposits." Presented at the 71st Annual Institute on Lake Superior

Geology [ILSG] conference, May 15-16, 2025, in Mountain Iron, MN.

Drew Casper with Robert Lodge, "Geology of the Plover Au Prospect, Marathon County, Wisconsin." Presented at the 71st Annual Institute on Lake Superior Geology [ILSG] conference, May 15-16, 2025, in Mountain Iron, MN.

Renee Jeutter with Robert Lodge, "Geology and Geochemistry of the Round Lake Intrusive Complex and Ti-Mineralization, Northern Wisconsin." Presented at the 71st Annual Institute on Lake Superior Geology [ILSG] conference, May 15-16, 2025, in Mountain Iron, MN.

Haley Johannesen with Robert Lodge, "Geology and Geochemistry of the Ritchie Creek Cu-Zn deposit, Northcentral Wisconsin." Presented at the 71st Annual Institute on Lake Superior Geology [ILSG] conference, May 15-16, 2025, in Mountain Iron, MN.

Samara Gries with Robert Lodge, "Rare-element Geochemistry of the Eau Claire River Complex Pegmatites." Presented at the 71st Annual Institute on Lake Superior Geology [ILSG] conference, May 15-16, 2025, in Mountain Iron, MN.

Jake Cipar, Avery McKeown-Robbie and Sophia Pence with Phillip Ihinger, "Is There More to the Mineral Lake Intrusive Complex? Testing a Genetic Relationship with the Rearing Pond Intrusion."



Sarah Vitale's environmental research presenters at the WI section of the AWRA in the Wisconsin Dells (L to R): Cate Blair, Meg Walker, Natalie Engh, Avery McKeown-Robbie, and Claire Schoenemann



Robert Lodge's economic geology research crew at the ILSG meeting at Mountain Iron, MN, May 2025 (L to R): Renee Jeutter, Bekah Thompson, Haley Johannesen, Samara Gries, Drew Casper, Lyndsie Vickers, and Aidan Kwiatkowski

INTERNSHIP CORNER

One goal of the Responsible Mining Initiative is to provide practical work experience for our undergraduate students through paid internships. Our efforts to enhance internship opportunities have been a resounding success. Two students continued their summer 2024 internships part time into the academic year. During the past academic year and this summer, 15 students have had/will have paid internships with metallic and non-metallic mining companies, environmental consulting firms, and governmental agencies and earn ~\$125,000 in wages. This large number of paid internships is highly unusual for an undergraduate geology program.



INTERTEK PSI
Chippewa Falls, WI
Rebecca Hafey |
Geotechnical intern



INTERTEK PSI
Chippewa Falls, WI
Bryce Yeo |
Geotechnical intern



INTERTEK PSI
Chippewa Falls, WI
Abrielle Van Dyck |
Geotechnical intern



INTERTEK PSI
Chippewa Falls, WI
Bri Hilton |
Geology intern



INTERTEK PSI
Chippewa Falls, WI
Caden Weber |
Drilling Intern



STANTEC
Minneapolis, MN
Ciara Pearson |
Hydrogeology intern



STEELE SOLUTIONS
Milwaukee, WI
Lucas Buntten |
Environmental intern



*BROWN CTY LAND & WATER
CONSERVATION DEPT.*
Green Bay, WI
Lucy Christman |
Environmental intern





CITY OF EAU CLAIRE

Eau Claire, WI

Wyatt Draves |
Parks intern



CITY OF EAU CLAIRE

Eau Claire, WI

Avery McKeown-Robbie |
Utilities intern



KGHM

Ruth, NV

Madison Shepard |
Mining intern



HIGHLAND COPPER

White Pine, MI

Meg Walker |
Mining intern



FOTH ENVIRONMENTAL

Duluth, MN

Samara Gries |
Environmental intern



NOAA

Hawaii

Abby Norstad |
Ocean Mapping intern



TALON METALS

L'Anse, MI

Lyndsie Vickers |
Mining intern



EARTH SCIENCE SEMINAR SERIES

The Earth Science Seminar Series continues to bring excellent speakers to campus. It allows faculty and students to interact with other scientists working on a broad range of research topics, and it also permits us to "show off" our department and research equipment to the visitors....! Below are the talks presented during this academic year. Seminars schedules are posted on the Geology website. If you live in the area and would like to receive e-mail announcements about upcoming seminars, please contact Dr. Sarah Vitale at vitalesa@uwec.edu. If your company wishes to sponsor the seminar series or contribute money to defray speaker costs, please contact us!

"The Tropical Icehouse. A 300-Million-Year-Old Record of Climate and Ecosystem

Change." Presented by Randall Irmis, Univ. of Utah, Curator of Paleontology, Natural History Museum of Utah. 10/25/24.

"Curious About Graduate School?" Presented by UWEC Faculty in the Dept. of Geology and Environmental Science and the Dept. of Geography and Anthropology. 11/15/24.

"Protecting Sensitive Freshwater Ecosystems: Challenges, Successes, and Opportunities in Removing Sulfur and Mercury from Surface Water." Presented by Dr. Nathan Johnson, Professor, Dept. of Civil Engineering, Univ. of Minnesota-Duluth. 2/21/25.

"How Wisconsin Meets Its Renewable Energy Goals." Presented by Grace Lacke, RenUSA Regional Vice President and Farm-

to-Power Wisconsin Supervisor. 3/7/25.

"Post-glacial River Network Expansion in the US Midwest: Process and Rates." Presented by Dr. Alison Anders, Associate Professor, Dept. of Earth Science and Environmental Change, Univ. of Illinois. 4/4/25.

"Beaver Dam Removal Impacts on Low Flow, Temperature, and Fish Movement in Lake Superior Streams." Presented by Dr. Karen Gran, Associate Professor, Dept. of Earth and Environmental Sciences, Univ. of Minnesota-Duluth. 4/11/25.

"Out on a Song: A Geographical Hymn." Presented by Dr. Paul Kaldjian, Professor of Geography, UWEC.

FACULTY AND STAFF NEWS

TADESSE ALEMU, Assistant Professor
alemutb@uwec.edu



My first year at UWEC has been a rewarding journey filled with meaningful opportunities to engage with students, colleagues, and the broader university community.

A little bit about me: I specialize in sedimentology and tectonics. I earned my BSc and MSc degrees in Earth Sciences from Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. I then completed my Ph.D. at Oklahoma State University, where my research explored the formation and evolution of IntraCONTinental Sags (ICONS), specifically examining a Paleozoic-Mesozoic sedimentary basin that is now structurally exhumed on the eastern flank of the East African Rift System. Following my PhD, I was a visiting assistant professor at Skidmore College in New York. I later completed a postdoctoral fellowship at UC-Berkeley, to constrain the timing of exhumation related to rift basin inversion in the Lake Superior region of the Midcontinent Rift using thermochronology. This experience

brought me to the Midwest and ultimately led me to Wisconsin. Before joining UWEC, I also taught Structural Geology and introductory courses at Colby College in Maine.

My family and I moved to Eau Claire in mid-July 2025 with our three children, including a 45-day-old newborn. The transition was made smoother thanks to the support of colleagues. I am especially grateful to Scott Clark, who helped us find housing and provided valuable information about local schools and resources in Eau Claire and the Twin Cities. I also thank Rob for sharing course materials and helping me begin the semester smoothly. The provost, dean's office, and administrative staff were also instrumental in helping me through the hiring process and purchasing research equipment. I'm especially grateful to the colleagues, mentors, and student assistants who made this first year so enjoyable and welcoming.

During the 2024–25 academic year, I taught Geol 110 in both fall and spring, as well as Geol 330 (Structural Geology) in the fall. Teaching a mix of upper- and lower-level courses was both rewarding and demanding, especially with limited time to identify suitable field trip locations. I recognize the long-standing value of field experiences in our department's curriculum and students' strong appreciation for them. In response, I plan to incorporate both day-long and overnight field trips in the Fall 2025 Geol

330 course. In 2025, I joined the first two weeks of Field Camp I in New Mexico and taught Geol 320 (Sed/Strat) in the spring, which included a two-day field trip to Lake Superior. I also participated in Field Camp II in Montana, gaining a deeper understanding of course expectations and preparation.

I also mentored five research students this year, three of whom presented their work at CERCA--a great moment for all of us. I'm grateful for ORSP support that made this possible. This summer, I plan to refine my courses, strengthen the field components, and thoughtfully address the challenges I encountered during my first year. I'm excited about what lies ahead and about the continued growth of our department.

SCOTT CLARK, Professor and Chair
clarksco@uwec.edu

Wow, a decade and a half has flown by since I joined the department. My daughter was starting kindergarten our first year here, and she will be a junior at UW-Madison next fall. I'm happy to say that as the years pass, I continue to enjoy many aspects of my work. The best part has always come from working with our students in the classroom or in the field, conducting research, advising, or just having conversations. This year was no exception: Libby Nelson (GEOL minor), Alicia Merklein (GEOL major), and I had a great time auditing the solid waste at Eau Claire's wastewater treatment plant.

No, seriously, if you wear proper PPE and get used to the smell, you can dig up some very useful data to inform targeted outreach efforts to the community. Libby and Alicia presented our findings at CERCA, and we will continue the research next year, but not at the wastewater treatment plant. I wish all of you a healthy and rewarding year.

PHILLIP IHINGER, Professor

ihinger@uwec.edu

Greetings, Bugold Geologists! A new year, another retirement, and (fortunately), a new colleague (welcome, Zach!). We will all miss the strong leadership of Bob Hooper, but we are nevertheless delighted with the new direction our department is heading. I've taken over the duties of teaching MinPet I & MinPet II, and I'm loving it (check out the images/writeup of our field trips in this newsletter). Those of you who took MinPet I with me in 2002 (remember the Yeti??; Outcrops in the Rain??) and 2008 will know I've missed teaching the full MinPet sequence, and I'm delighted to wind down my career doing so. I continue to teach Earth Resources, Global Environmental Change, and Introductory Physical Geology, so I stay busy.

On the research front, my team of young scholars continues to enhance our understanding of the Mineral Lake Intrusive Suite. UWEC undergraduate students Avery McKeown-Robbie, Jake Cipar, Robin Pence, and Alyssa Nemeroff have collaborated with me in a multi-disciplined approach to understand the evolution of the 50-km wide magmatic body. This year, we've focused on solving the three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle (including thrust faults, strike-slip faults, and normal faults) to piece together the structural evolution of the suite (in conjunction with the geochemistry we've conducted to characterize its magmatic evolution). We've determined that ~50% of the body is 'hidden', and we now know where the missing part of the body is situated (and did I say this should be the part of the magma body hosting economic mineral deposits?!). Our results are intriguing, to say the least, and they opened a few eyes at our annual CERCA conference. On a separate path, I've devoted a significant amount of my research time toward building an

innovative theoretical treatment of space and matter. Recently, I've been able to show how (and why) electrons interact to make covalent bonds. My hope is to soon host a mini-conference at UWEC to unveil the Eau Claire Interpretation. Samantha Mitchell ('25) has been instrumental in applying the animation program, Blender, to visualize my model and bring these ideas to life, and she too presented at CERCA.

Tricia and I continue to enjoy our empty nest, as Kaia (our beautiful dog) fills our home and our hearts with her amazing spirit. Kaia is also our secret weapon to ensure regular visits from Ghislaine, Mati, and Evie! Meanwhile, don't be shy, and please stop by my office if you find yourself back in Eau Claire for any reason.

ROBERT LODGE, Associate Professor

lodgerw@uwec.edu

Greetings alumni and friends! Another year into the transition and I am feeling older. We welcomed a new colleague, Dr. Tadesse Alemu, to the department and it has been "fun" to remember how hard the first year was for me. Soon enough, I'll be the grizzled old guy in the department. More significant than a mid-career crisis, Lorilie has retired. I quickly realized I don't know how anything works around here. As much as her expertise will be missed, I will also be missing the random chats in her office and her presence in the department. Happy retirement, Lorilie!

My research program was very successful this year because of a WiSys Applied Research Grant I received. I had a few research students (nine...) that resulted in eight research posters at CERCA. Lyndsie Vickers (x'26) and Aiden Kwiatkowski ('25) worked on refining U/Pb geochronology in the Penokean Orogen. Bekah Thompson ('25) and Renee Jeutter (x'26) worked on critical mineral deposits in Wisconsin's Mid-Continent Rift. Samarah Gries (x'26) studied critical minerals in 1.5 Ga pegmatites in the Eau Claire region. Haley Johannesen ('25) and Drew Casper (x'25) researched VMS deposits in northern Wisconsin. Daniel Shakked ('24) and Kenny Walter ('25) examined gold mineralization from a gold mine in northwestern Montana. Seven of those students presented their work at the 71st Annual Meeting of the Institute of Lake Superior Geology at Mountain Iron, MN. Congrats

to Lyndsie for bringing home the best student poster presentation for the second year in a row!

Teaching in my upper- and lower-division courses continues to be a rewarding experience. Earth History was taught for the first time in the spring semester to make it more of a capstone class. And, of course, I brought them to see the Superior Craton in Minnesota! I also continue to enjoy bringing geoscience to the masses in my National Parks and Physical Geology classes.

The Lodge Family has not grown in numbers this year – still six kids. Never a restful moment in our home, but Cassie and I love the energy. All is well in the Lodge home.

LORILIE STEINKE, Academic Department Associate

steinklm@uwec.edu

Greetings. After 35 years at UWEC, it is time for me to say goodbye, turn the page, and begin the next chapter of my life. I have enjoyed my years at UWEC working with all students who have become a big part of my life. I look forward to spending more time with my three granddaughters, working in my yard, and taking time to enjoy all that I have worked so hard to achieve. Best wishes to all of you and I look forward to reading your updates in the future editions of the "Dig It!"

KENT SYVERSON, Professor

syverskm@uwec.edu

I hope you are doing well. I completed my 33rd year at UWEC and still enjoy my interactions with college students. I taught Geomorphology, Oceanography, and the Responsible Mining Seminar during the academic year.

The year was a good one. I still have many Oceanography students attend my office hours to improve their critical-thinking skills. I continue to work part time as a development officer with the UWEC Foundation -- thanks to all alumni who are such generous donors to the Dept. of Geology and Environmental Science. In addition, two students and I attended the Petroleum Connection frac sand conference in San Antonio, TX, in Nov. 2024 -- always an enjoyable trip. The Alumni Association invited me

FACULTY AND STAFF NEWS (continued)

to speak about My Adventures in Glacier Bay in the Twin Cities, and it was fun seeing many geology and non-geology alumni in attendance. Perhaps the Alumni Association tour will come to your part of the world in the future!

On the professional front, the wall-sized glacial geology map for the State of Wisconsin was published in April and is available at the WGNHS website. It would look great on your office wall! I completed my role as an administrator for an NSF grant supporting research in Argentina on Dec. 31st, so I became an expert with complex expense reports. Thankfully, that work ended before executive orders caused much uncertainty with federal grants. In addition, I continue to consult in the frac sand industry.

Life at home is going well. Lila and I now have two grandchildren – they are healthy and growing quickly, and that has been fun to watch. Lila and I continue to read books out loud to each other (Frankenstein was our latest book), and each evening we ride our bikes for five miles. I ride my recumbent e-bike frequently to get outside.

Pocket watches have been an important part of my life this year. When I was a kid, my dad collected many pocket watches (>300 watches), and I accompanied him on his watch-buying adventures. I enjoyed these times and became a “pocket watch expert.” This year, we moved the pocket watches from my hometown bank into an Eau Claire bank. Now I’m helping my daughters sell the pocket watches on eBay (see artful-antiquarian and rebsyve-63 if interested). It has been fun (and personally meaningful) passing their grandpa’s passion along to my kids—Gramps would be pleased!

Please visit us on campus!

Rawling III, J.E., Carson, E.C., Attig, J.W., Mickelson, D.M., Mode, W.N., Johnson, M.D., and Syverson, K.M., 2025, Quaternary Geology of Wisconsin: Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey Map 512, 1:500,000-scale.



SARAH VITALE, Associate Professor

vitalesa@uwec.edu

This past year has been a good year for making progress and taking some time to reset during my sabbatical. In September, I took my daughter with me to the GSA meeting in Anaheim where I presented the outcomes of our NSF-funded high school Geology camp and spent some quality time at Disneyland. I also spent six days in Sayulita, Mexico, for a yoga retreat in January--no work, no husband, and no kids! The geology flying into Puerto Vallarta was phenomenal (cinder cones surrounded by farmland and the ocean view). The delicious Mexican cuisine was unmatched.

I spent a good chunk of time writing a digital Water Science Activity Book for Kids, which is something I’ve had tucked away in my brain for a while. A sabbatical finally gave me the time and bandwidth to dig into it. I also spent more time volunteering at my children’s school and got them off the bus most days. One of my children started kindergarten this year, so it was extra special to be able to spend time with him in that space.

This past year was our fourth and final year of our NSF-funded GEOPATHs grant, and we focused on providing research mentorship opportunities to our Geology majors. I also ran my 2nd Environmental Science Day for high school students in May, and I will run my last Freshwater high school camp along with a K12 Educator Groundwater workshop in June. I continued research with five students, and we all attended the Wisconsin AWRA Meeting in the Wisconsin Dells in April to present two posters related to rural water quality in Eau Claire County.

Notably, this year I facilitated our first three-week Field Hydrology course, which expands on the two-week Freshwater Science Field Course I’ve run since 2022 (see separate article). It was a resounding success, with 11 students from three different UW campuses (including six UWEC Geology majors). Geology majors can now use this Field Hydrology course as a capstone option, and it provides an incredibly valuable option for our Hydrogeology and Environmental Science emphasis students to expand on their pre-existing coursework.

While I was on sabbatical, Dr. Liza Bednarik-Wernicke taught Env. Geology and Hydrogeology I. I couldn’t have asked for a better person to teach that content, demonstrated by students excelling in Field Hydrology after taking Hydrogeology with Liza.

Dr. Zach Meyers will be joining our faculty in the Fall to contribute to the environmental geology aspects of our programming. We’re thrilled to build up that facet of our department, and I’m looking forward to collaborating with him in teaching and research.

EMERITI FACULTY NEWS

KAREN HAVHOLM, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Research, Emerita

havholm@gmail.com

Greetings! Well, this was an interesting year. We had a great trip to Yellowknife in September (first visit when the lakes were not frozen) to visit daughter Merilie, who works for the Northwest Territories Geological Survey there. We tried out e-bikes, which prompted us to get some ourselves recently. Then another fun trip to Los Angeles for Christmas to see my brother and my nephew’s family. At the last minute, my nephew could not be there because he got tapped to film the Beyonce Christmas NFL half-time show in Houston! (This is my closest brush with famous people.) But we did visit with friends from when we lived in Iran in the 1970s.

My dissertation advisor from UT-Austin (Gary Kocurek) was tragically killed in a bike-car accident in June 2024. This precipitated a memorial gathering in April in Moab, UT, where he and many of his students had worked on questions related to eolian processes and products. That turned out to be a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with graduate school friends and other colleagues. *If you have not talked to someone for a while, and you think there will always be time to do so, don’t wait. There might not be.*

Glenn spent half of May 2025 in the hospital with a series of medical issues. He is mostly recovered now, but it meant he could not go with me to Ottawa to the GAC-MAC meeting where Merilie received the William Harvey Gross early-career award from the Mineral Deposits Division of the Geological Association of Canada. Proud Mom! I recommend Ottawa as a place to visit, especially during the Tulip Festival.

I hope this finds you all well and thriving. Come visit!

EMERITI STAFF NEWS (continued)

ROBERT HOOPER, Professor Emeritus

hooperrl@uwec.edu

Greetings, geology alumni. The first full year of my retirement from the department has gone so quickly. Who could have guessed there was so much to be done if you weren't working for a living. Ginger, Serrano (the yellow lab geology dog), and I all helped Scott with the January field course in Kingston, NM. It was the first time Ginger had been down to Kingston in a decade and Serrano's first time travelling to New Mexico. The weather could have been warmer in New Mexico, but it beat freezing in Wisconsin. As a retiree, when the field camp crew returned to Eau Claire, Ginger, Serrano, and I stayed in the desert southwest for an additional week to visit relatives in Arizona and to spend a few more days in New Mexico. Not rushing back to Eau Claire to start teaching again was one of the rewards for retiring. Serrano loved having the geology students in the Black Range Lodge but was also eager to get back to Wisconsin where walks are not filled with cacti, sharp rocks, and pesky javelinas. The first two weeks of April we planned a trip to Hawaii to see if we could catch Kilauea erupting and to do some beach time. It took two day-long visits to Hawaii Volcano National Park before we were lucky enough to catch a fountaining event. We hiked to the edge of the caldera on the south rim for a good view and some pictures. It was a highlight of my geology career to visit a volcano with active basalt fountaining and lava flows. By the time we got back to Eau Claire in mid-April, it was "almost" spring.

I have spent much of the past year attending to deferred property maintenance from my decades of work, and we now have more time to spend with the grandchildren in New Jersey. We have several trips to visit family scheduled for summer and early fall and are trying to squeeze in a trip back to the Mediterranean (Sicily or Croatia) for early fall. While I miss the daily interaction with the Geology students, having the time to travel and the slower pace of retirement has its positive side.

PAUL E. MYERS, Professor Emeritus

paul.myers600@gmail.com

During my winter "escape" to Panama with my wife, Welthy, I have resumed leading ex-pat group field trips to sites of geologic interest in western Panama and expanded field study into areas endowed with unique volcanism - like pyroclastic flows that went down rivers into the ocean. I could use help in the field and in dating rocks and the fossils in them. Welthy and I plan to return to Vermont in June, and always enjoy hearing from you - especially those in field camp.

Editor's note: Paul enjoys visits from former students. David Risch '78 and Sandy Rushworth visited Paul and Welthy in Panama prior to a Caribbean cruise. Here is Dave's update on Paul and Welthy. "Dr. Myers, still passionate about field work and with a sharp mind at age 96, took us on a field trip around the volcano. I did the driving while Dr. Myers did the navigating and narrating. Our first outcrop was a beautiful example of columnar-jointed andesite. The outcrop had both horizontal and cross-sectional views of the columns. Dr Myers proposed the pyroclastics had flowed down the Caldera River valley parallel to our road, then turned sharply toward the road at a gooseneck bend in a steep-walled canyon. We looked at thin sections of the andesite from the pyroclastic flow under his polarizing microscope. It had cooled so quickly that fragments of hornblende and plagioclase are suspended in the rock that is 65% glass. Of course I had to collect a sample. Dr. Myers pointed out a lot of field work still needs to be done mapping and describing the volcanics in the region around Volcan Baru. As we continued our drive, we passed a coffee plantation, fruit trees, dairy cows, and jungle as we drove on winding roads down and up deep narrow canyons dissecting the massive lahar plain around the volcano. As we left for our cruise, Dr. Myers was preparing another field trip for the locals to educate them on the geology; and inevitable floods, landslides, and erosion of tuffs and lahars they built their houses on." *Editor's comment -- As you can see, Dr. Myers is still Dr. Myers!!!*



JOHN TINKER, Professor Emeritus

tinkerjr@triwest.net

Hello to all present and former geology students. I miss teaching and interacting with you. Enjoy the coming year, work hard, stay healthy, enjoy the geology of your area, and keep smiling. I send you my best regards.

NEW DEPARTMENT SOCIAL HOUR

This spring, we started a weekly department social hour where students and faculty take a break, chat, and possibly play a game. We had good turnouts in the weeks when GEOL classes didn't have long field trips - and we're looking forward to continuing the social hour in the fall.



Geology Social Hour in P203

(room look similar to your UWEC days?!)

CONGRATS, GRADS!



Graduating seniors after the new Sonnentag Center's first spring commencement ceremony, May 17, 2025

RECENT GEOLOGY GRADUATES

*Fall 2024, Spring & Summer 2025 (unofficial list) * denotes Geology minor*

MATT BEATREZ
CATHERINE BLAIR
JAKE CIPAR
NATALIE ENGH
KAITLYN FIELD
SAM FISCHER
RACHEL FOLDY
KATRINA GOSSE
BRI HILTON

HALEY JOHANNESSEN
LYDIA KADLEC
AIDAN KWIATKOWSKI
SAMANTHA MITCHELL
KEVIN OLDS JR.
TIA RAVARA *
JANE RISGAARD
LOGAN SANCES
CLAIRE SCHOENEMANN

SARA SCOTT
DANIEL SHAKKED
BENJAMIN STUCKEY
BEKAH THOMPSON
STEPHEN TOMLIN
KENNY WALTER
TALON ZAGER
REED ZIMMER *

CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS OF 2024-25!

Please stay in touch! Make sure we have your new email address.

ALUMNI NEWS

Veronica Aranda '18. Veronica is an Environmental Scientist at SEH in Chippewa Falls, and she is now a PG in Wisconsin.

Jeff and Char Baker '71. "It has been quite some time since reporting in to DIG IT. I was one of the first graduates from UWEC in geology. This note is a chance to express my gratitude to those who instilled a love of science in me and made my career in education possible. SO, thank you Dr. Hooper, Dr. Myers, and posthumously Dr. Willis!! Char and I have lived in AZ's White Mts. since 2002. Char stays busy with volunteer work with service organizations and at the elementary school where our daughter teaches. After a number of joint replacements over the years, I gave up mountaineering with our son and quit the ski patrol. I enjoy doing astronomy with our 11-inch catadioptric telescope housed in a dome in our back yard. We both continue to enjoy travel, especially cruising, but keeping our 4-acre property wildfire resistant is a lot of work, and we might consider a move back to WI someday."

Cate Blair '25. Cate started as a Field Geologist with Barr Engineering in Minneapolis in July 2025.

Nicole Cochems '24. Nicole accepted a job as a Staff Geologist at Associated Earth Science Inc. in Seattle, WA. She is currently working with the geotechnical group as a construction monitor.

Jacob Erickson '20. Jacob writes, "After spending a brief stint in Indiana doing in-situ environmental remediation, I've decided to take a slightly different direction in my career and focus on water and the mining industry. Currently, I am employed with Global Resource Engineering, Ltd., a small engineering firm located just outside of Golden, CO. I've done many different things from running field programs involving well installation, development, and pump testing (24 hours goes by a lot faster in the field) to 2-D seepage modeling & water balances. These projects have taken me to places throughout South America, like the rainforests of Ecuador and Guyana. In all, I'm very fortunate to have found something I love to do AND in places well known for their beauty."

Beth Fisher '99. Beth writes, "I was promoted to Associate Professor this year at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I teach geology and soil science and conduct research in regenerative agriculture and am interested in more work in restorative processes. Like much of higher education, my university is in a difficult financial situation. My university is handling this, in part, by merging programs, so we will no longer have a Geology BS degree going forward. We have been working hard to keep a geoscience degree in the academic portfolio, likely as a track within a multidisciplinary program. Please reach out and stop by if you're in Mankato!"

Corrie Floyd '06. Corrie writes, "I'm still working with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. I supervise a team that evaluates contaminated sites in Minnesota and refers them to the appropriate Superfund program. At home, we're happy trying to keep up with our three ladies Lyla (10), Henley (7), and CC (3)."

Michelle Forgett '08. Michelle is now a Senior Project Geologist at Seequent in Perth, West Australia.

Jonah Gagnon '19. Jonah is Senior Project Manager with Clean Harbors in Portland, OR. He is in the Remediation and Bulk Waste division for the Pacific Northwest region.

Lynn Galston '04. Lynn is now the Data Governance Lead-Project Development at Equinor.

Lillian Glodowski '23. Lilly writes, "This year has been a bit chaotic, but I'm doing very well! In July 2024, I started working full time in the Dunn County Zoning Division. Our shoreland/non-metallic mining zoning officer (who has a background in hydrogeology) has taken me under her wing as I've been navigating the new world of zoning. I've been surprised by how much zoning and geology/environmental science go together! In addition to helping with zoning permits, I've been working on environmental impact reports for rezones and visiting sites for septic system installations. I even met with WGNHS about the geologic mapping project they plan to complete in Dunn County!"

Eventually, I hope to start doing some GIS work and training related to soils. I have been attending soil tester training and this spring I will attend several training sessions relating to private onsite wastewater treatment systems. On a personal note, Carson and I got engaged in August, and Carson bought a house in September, so we've been busy with wedding planning and home renovations!"

Kevin Gostomski '05. Kevin writes, "After ten years of teaching Earth Science and AP Biology in New York City, my wife and I decided to move back to Wisconsin to raise our two children. I'm currently working for an engineering consulting company (ECS Midwest) and helping to build a new Madison branch office."

Heidi Gunderson '24. Heidi is a Lab Technician in the aggregates division at AET's St. Paul office.

JR Guy '10. JR writes, "I'm currently working at Call & Nicholas, Inc in Tucson, AZ, as Lead Geotechnical Geologist. My focus has been on slope stability and design optimization for open pit mines."

Doug Hallum '92. Doug writes, "The last year has been a whirlwind for Paula and me. Last fall, our eldest granddaughter married, and I decided to change roles after more than 12 years with the Conservation and Survey Division. My new role is Water Resources Manager with the Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District in Norfolk, Nebraska. This job required a move (not so easy as it once was) and placed many new technical and political water quality and quantity challenges on my plate. To top it all off, our recently married granddaughter is now expecting. We are truly blessed!"

Bryan Hardel '09. Bryan has been promoted to V.P. Operations at Big Rock Exploration.

Lindsey Henricks '23. Lindsey started a new position as a Geologist at SET Environmental, Inc. in Milwaukee. She is excited to be back home in Wisconsin.

David Hodek '95. David writes, "Looking forward to another summer in Duluth, although those three weeks really fly by up here."

ALUMNI NEWS (continued)

My oldest daughter is a sophomore in Mechanical Engineering at UND in Grand Forks where the weather is arguably worse, and the younger daughter is starting to look at colleges. I hope UW-Eau Claire makes the short list and I'll have an excuse to go along on a college visit. Work is busier than ever with much travel to Tennessee where we're supporting a new natural gas electric generation plant replacing a retiring coal plant. It's a nice spot to visit--reminds me of the Driftless Area with higher hills and fewer Wisconsin accents."

Glen Hook '19. Glen completed his M.Sc. in hydrogeology at the Univ. of Guelph and is now a consultant with ERM in West Allis, WI.

Regan Jacobson '19. Regan started a new position as a Project Geologist at Paladin Energy. "I'm looking forward to advancing exploration of the Michelin deposit and other uranium resources within the Central Mineral Belt of Labrador!"

Kaine Johnson '23. Kaine is working on an M.Sc. degree in geology at the Memorial Univ. of Newfoundland.

Sal Kass '20. Sal completed his MBA at Concordia University-Wisconsin and is now a Construction Project Manager with Phoenix Construction in the Milwaukee area.

Dale Kerner '96. In March, Dale was appointed Vice President of Permitting for Integra Resources. He is based in Boise, ID, and has more than 25 years of experience in environmental permitting and regulatory compliance in the USA. Dale was previously with Perpetua Resources Corp., where he was instrumental in successfully permitting the Stibnite Gold Project in Idaho – one of the more complex permitting processes in the U.S., which recently received a final Record of Decision from the U.S. Forest Service. In the newly created role of VP of Permitting, Dale will be responsible for leading all aspects of permitting related to the Company's development stage projects, including DeLamar and the Nevada North Project.

Craig Koch '82. Craig writes, "Marie went to Mexico with our oldest to visit locations where the Monarch butterflies migrate too. I did not go because riding horses is not good for my back. I'm no longer substitute

teaching. Between having two grandkids living with us and rehearsal times for 3-4 bands each week, there is not much time left. I play trumpet and euphonium and am learning to play the trombone. We have three other grandchildren, and our youngest is expecting twins in June. I bought a recumbent tricycle last summer that has really resolved issues with my neck and back, and I rode ~1000 miles over four months."

Adam Krieger '09. Adam is Associate Vice President of Technical Sales-Insurance Underwriting at CoreLogic in the Twin Cities.

Alex Lawrence '24. Alex is a Geologist at Big Rock Exploration.

Jessica (Lopez) Harpham '05. Jessica has been a geologist with Chevron since 2007. She says, "I have absolutely loved doing geology in industry. [Kent's] glacial geology industry-type project really helped me see some of the practical real-life applications to our study of the earth. Thanks! We go to Milwaukee a lot to see family...but it's a bit out of the way to go all the way to Eau Claire. Especially with 2 kiddos."

Audrey (Mohr) Boerner '11. Audrey writes, "By the time this newsletter is published, we will have welcomed baby boy #3! It will be a full and active household this year. I am rounding out my 10th year with the Eau Claire City-County Health Dept., primarily working with our water lab and private well users. The last year has been happily marked by a county-wide water sampling partnership with Dr. Sarah Vitale and her students!"

Chelsea Moran '21. Chelsea is a GIT and Associate Scientist with Olsson Environmental in Fayetteville, AR.

Tyson Noffke '19. Tyson is an Exploration Geologist for Rangefront Mining Services in Salt Lake City, UT.

Lars Olauseen '10. Lars is now Mine Manager with the Lundin Mining Corp., Eagle Mine, Marquette, MI.

Kevin Olds Jr. '25. Kevin moved to Atlanta, GA, and is now a Staff Geologist with BB&E, Inc.

Issac Orr '10. Mitch Rolling and Isaac left the Minnesota-based think tank Center of the American Experiment and started their own energy modeling think tank called

Always On Energy Research. They publish on Substack as the "Energy Bad Boys."

Maddie Palubicki '22. Maddie writes, "This spring I will reach three years of working at Tetra Tech - Green Bay! As I go into my fourth field season of overseeing landfill construction projects, I am moving into a field manager role - training new staff and rotating through our various sites in the Midwest rather than staying at one site long-term. In the last year, I also got married and am looking forward to our honeymoon in May (we are visiting Iceland and Ireland). Take care!"

Haillie Passow '15. Haillie received her M.S. in Engineering from UW-Madison and is now a Conservation Engineering Specialist with the Trempealeau County (WI) Dept. of Land Management.

Nathan Raymaker '22. In November, Nathan joined Herndon Solutions Group as an Environmental Scientist II - NEPA Specialist. This role is within NASA's Environmental and Medical Contract (NEMCON) at Kennedy Space Center in Florida. He collaborates with the NASA Environmental Assurance Branch to uphold environmental regulations at local, state, and federal levels for both NASA and the Merritt Island tenant community.

Kalie Ress '21. Kalie writes, "This past spring I was promoted to Scientist-Geologist II at Tetra Tech in Green Bay. Last field season I worked coast-to-coast in the environmental side of Tetra Tech. In between work travel, I spent some personal time in Utah and California. In Utah, I snowboarded a few mountains and even played at a disc golf course where the 2021 World Championships was held! While in California, I felt the power of the Pacific Ocean and even got my first-ever ace disc golfing!! Now onto the 2025 field season!"

Angela Remer '05. Angela writes, "It's hard to believe it's been nearly 20 years since my Blugold days. I am currently working in the electric distribution industry as the Director of Development Operations at Dakota Electric Association. I've been in the role for about a year now and am enjoying it. I feel lucky to be part of such a supportive and talented team. I love connecting with fellow alumni, so feel free to reach out! I appreciate all the work that goes into

keeping alumni connected—looking forward to the next Dig It!”

Katie Richart '21. Katie writes, “I have been working with Teck American Inc. on the Red Dog Exploration Team since my graduation. This summer will be my 5th season at Red Dog and my 2nd season as a Project Geologist. I will be managing a multi-rig, heli-supported drill campaign primarily focusing on the Aktigirug-Anarraaq Extension Project from May thru October.”

David Risch '78. David writes, “In March, Sandy and I took a 10-day sailing cruise across the Southern Caribbean from Colon, Panama to Barbados. It was a perfect opportunity to also visit Dr. Paul Myers and his wife Welthy near Boquete, Panama. Dr. Myers taught my first geology class, Geology 101, in 1972. We stayed with them for two days at their condo that has a great view of Volcan Baru, the largest volcano in Panama, as well as a gorgeous view of the Pacific Ocean and islands to the south. Sandy and I thank Paul and Welthy for their generous hospitality.”

Kyle Roloff '17. Kyle is now a Quality Engineer III at Boston Scientific in the Twin Cities area.

Shelly Roth '95. Shelly writes, “Still loving retirement. Another summer road trip is in the works. I will be heading east this year to add the last three state capitals in the lower 48 to my photo collection. I started this tradition in Helena, MT, while at field camp in the summer of 1995. I hope to make it to St John's, Newfoundland, before traveling to Wisconsin to visit family and friends.”

Carrie Rowe '00. Carrie was promoted to a new position as Development and Subsurface Manager - CCS Canada at Shell.

Bridget (Russell) Jarosinski '22. Bridget married a Blugold alum, Tanner, in February 2025, and they honeymooned in Iceland. Bridget was also promoted to Staff Professional with SCS Engineers in the Madison area. .

Logan Sances '25. Logan has accepted a geologist position with Arcadis in Minneapolis.

Herald Schultz '08. Herald started a new position as Senior Environmental Specialist

at Madison Gas and Electric in Madison.

Roger Schultz '13. Roger started a new position as GIS Analyst for the City of Blaine, MN.

Daniel Shakked '24. Daniel is an Exploration Geologist with Big Rock Exploration in the Twin Cities.

Shelby Short '22. Shelby completed her MS in Energy and Earth Resources at UT-Austin. She is now a Research Scientist II (Mineral Resources and Mapping Specialist) at the Texas Bureau of Economic Geology in Austin, TX.

William Speech '24. Will is an Assistant Geologist at Terracon in Bismarck, ND.

Jessica Stamp '20. Jessica is a Civil Engineering Technician with Cmg Engineering, Kalispell, MT.

Yusen (Terrence) Tan '25. Terrence has enrolled in the Environmental and Sustainability Policy M.S. program at George Washington Univ.

Ashley (Thompson) Bell '18. Ashley is a Conservation Analyst with the Juneau County (WI) Land & Water Resources Dept.

Chad Underwood '96. Chad writes, “I know every parent says the same thing, but I can't believe our kids are graduating from high school this spring ('25) – doesn't seem possible. Our son is planning to attend Minnesota State Mankato, and our daughter is following in mom and dad's footsteps and will be attending UWEC. Unfortunately, I couldn't talk her into the geology program. I thought for sure that all my informal geology lectures during spring break family hikes in the desert southwest over the years would have sparked an intense curiosity. I've been proven wrong! I'm sure I'll be on campus more often over the next several years so I will be sure to stop in and say 'hi'”

Ron Weegman '81. Ron writes, “I retired in Cajun Country in South Louisiana after a 35-year career in Oil & Gas. Patty and I enjoy the winters in the south and the cooler summers and lake life of northern Wisconsin.”

Ryan Willgohe '19. Ryan is now a Senior Hydrogeologist at Talon Metals Corp. in Tamarack, MN.

Benjamin Young '24. Ben is a Natural Resource Scientist at Associated Earth Sciences Inc. in Seattle, WA.

Zac Zens '16. Zac started a new position as Senior Exploration Geologist at KGHM International.

Ashley Zuge '21. Ashley writes, “This past year was a big year for me professionally—I am still with Tetra Tech, but I am not working in the field anymore. I have taken over our soils lab! Right now, I am the Assistant Lab Manager because I needed help with invoicing and the management side of things, but hopefully by the end of the year I will have the title of “Manager.” I moved into an apartment in Appleton with my boyfriend, so now I must be a true adult and pay bills! We just got back from a wonderful trip from Jamaica. In May, I am visiting Victoria from my intro to geology class in South Carolina. I am also going to the Indy 500 this summer with my parents and boyfriend! Next time I am in the Eau Claire area I will have to stop in and say hey, miss seeing you every day!”

In Memoriam: Paula Sumpter '82 passed away on July 8, 2024.



Field Camp II students walking into field area, Montana

EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The department awards excellence awards for academic achievement and service to the department. The "Excellence in Geology" Award recognizes the academic achievements of the outstanding graduating geology major in coursework, faculty/student collaborative research, and potentially internships. The winners of the Geology Excellence Award for 2024-2025 are Claire Schoenemann and Aidan Kwiatkowski. The Excellence in Service Award recognizes the exceptional service a geology major has provided to the department. Haley Johannesen, Bekah Thompson, and Lyndsie Vickers are recipients of the 2024-25 Geology Excellence in Service Award. Congratulations to our Excellence award winners!

Claire is a native of Lodi, WI, and graduated this spring with Honors as a double major in Geology- Environmental Science and Communications. She excelled in an interdisciplinary project on water science communication and research related to water quality in Eau Claire County, stepping naturally into a leadership role on both projects. She produced graphics to share information about water quality testing to the community after presenting her ideas to the Eau Claire County Groundwater Advisory Committee. She also presented her water quality research to the scientific community at the Wisconsin AWRA Meeting in April 2025. Claire received the David L. Risch Geology Research Scholarship and the Blugold Geology Alumni Scholarship. She studied abroad in Ireland her junior year, where she used the opportunity to write a report about the geology of areas she visited to fulfill her Honors program requirements. She's had high-quality geology internships at AMI Silica (Hixton) and Foth (Green Bay). She returned to UWEC briefly in June to assist with a high school Freshwater camp, before starting a full-time geology position at Foth in July.

Aidan is a native of Forest Lake, MN, and graduated this spring with Honors in his degree in Geology (General Emphasis). We recruited him into our program with a Blugold Freshman Geology Scholarship, and he did not disappoint us! Aidan was usually the top performer in his geology coursework. In our field camps, Aidan earned top honors and was awarded the Myers/Willis Geology Field Camp Scholarship. He also received the Sophomore Geology Promise Scholarship and the H2O Well Drilling & Pump Service Geology Scholarship. He conducted research with Robert Lodge on the zircon petrochronology (U/Pb, Lu/Hf, trace element) of VMS deposits in Wisconsin and presented this research at ILSG meeting in Mountain Iron, MN. His research involved mineral separations, remote operation of a LA-ICP-MS, and data reduction (all 800+ analyses). This research will also be presented at the international Society of Geology Applied to Mineral Deposits Biennial Meeting in Golden, CO (first time the meeting has been in the US). He participated in a five-day field trip to study Precambrian volcanic rocks in Canada and northern Minnesota as part of an NSF-funded research project. Aidan was offered three internship positions through the USGS-NAGT cooperative program prior to the federal hiring freeze and has since accepted a Geologist position at Big Rock Exploration.

Haley is a native of Cary, IL, and graduated with her degree in Geology (Environmental Science Emphasis and a Responsible Mining Certificate). Haley served as a TA for Field Camp I (once) and Field Camp II (twice) and received stellar reviews from students and faculty. According to Rob Lodge, "This is the first time I've seen such overwhelming positive feedback from students that directly mentions the impact the TA had on the student experience at field camp. Haley blew us all away with her positive attitude, helpfulness, and willingness to go above and beyond her regular field camp duties

to make sure that the camp was a positive experience for all students." In addition to her service, she conducted research with Robert Lodge on the origin of the Ritchie Creek Cu-Zn deposit in Wisconsin, presented this research at ILSG in northern Minnesota, and had an internship with American Excelsior Company in Rice Lake. She has started a full-time job with Big Rock Exploration in the Twin Cities.

Bekah is a native of Woodbury, MN, and graduated with her degree in Geology (General Emphasis). Bekah was a key player in making the new weekly departmental social hours a success. She offered to help Scott Clark set up and clean up for the first social hour, and then she kept taking on more responsibilities to ensure each week's social hour went smoothly. In addition to her service, she conducted research with Robert Lodge on the PGE mineralization of the Mineral Lake Intrusive Complex, presented this research at ILSG in Mountain Iron, MN, and spent two weeks in Argentina and five days in Canada and northern Minnesota studying volcanic rocks as part of an NSF-funded research project.

Lyndsie is a native of Alva, OK, and is a rising senior in our Geology program. Lyndsie has been President of the Geology Club, a TA for the GEOPATHS geology science camps for high school students, and an enthusiastic person who meets with prospective Geology majors who are still in high school. In addition to her service, she has conducted research with Robert Lodge on the petrogenesis and geochronology of the Eau Claire Volcanic Complex, presented this research twice at ILSG and received best student poster awards at each meeting. She is the recipient of many departmental and Arts and Sciences scholarships and has obtained two paid internships with Talon Metals.



Excellence in Geology Award winners, Claire Schoenemann and Aidan Kwiatkowski



Excellence in Service Award winners (L to R): Haley Johannesen, Lyndsie Vickers, and Bekah Thompson

ADOPT A FIELD CAMPER CAMPAIGN UPDATE

By Kent Syverson

In 2017 we initiated an "Adopt a Field Camper" campaign to defray rising tuition costs for Field Camp I students. This year alumni, friends, and companies donated \$50,542, in both large and small gifts, to Adopt a Field Camper through the Myers/Willis Geology Field Camp Scholarship fund!

Dr. Paul Myers, Ric ('75) and Jacqueline Kopp, and Curt ('77) and Laura ('78) Peck have been faithful matching donors to this campaign over the years in memory of Professor Ronald Willis. Many other alumni, friends, and companies have caught the vision of the Adopt a Field Camper program to support the highest quality field camp experience for the lowest possible cost to students.

The Adopt a Field Camper program has two parts. First, the Paul Myers and Ronald Willis Geology Field Camp Scholarship fund (#1633) supplies scholarships and need-based grants to reduce the cost of students attending the three-week field camps in New Mexico (winter) and Montana (summer). Secondly, the Field Camp Advancement Fund-Geology & Environmental Science (#2924) is used to buy equipment to sustain high-quality field camp experiences -- a dire need in this fiscal environment.

Last year, 65 unique donors contributed \$30,953 to the Myers/Willis fund and \$19,589 to the Field Camp Advancement funds. The impacts? Funds were distributed based on financial need to 23 unique G470 and G471 students. All tuition expenses (\$1160) were paid for students with "High" FAFSA financial need, 75% of tuition paid was students with "Medium" need, and 50% of tuition paid for students with "Low" need. Each field camper, regardless of need, received at least \$230 in "adoption" money. In 2025, \$17,907 in grant money was distributed to G470 students (an 86% increase from 2024) and \$11,621 to G471 students (a 148% increase from 2024). These large increases were driven not only by larger class sizes, but also much higher student financial need. Thanks to donors who are making field camp affordable to ALL students regardless of their financial status! Field Camp Advancement money was used to replace some non-functional Brunton compasses and purchase new hand-held GPS devices. Thanks so much for your generosity!

If you have adopted a child, you know that adoption is a long-term commitment! More field camp students will be leaving for New Mexico and Montana next year, and we hope alumni and friends consider a donation of any size to Adopt a Field Camper to support Field Geology I and II students and their experiences. Donations can be made at <https://blugolds.uwec.edu/give/514270/#!/donation/checkout> (search

under Geology, select either fund #1633 or #2924) or by sending a check to the UWEC Foundation with a subject line mentioning "Geology--Adopt a Field Camper."

CURT AND LAURA PECK SPONSOR SCHOLARSHIPS AND HALF OF FIELD CAMP I

Curt and Laura Peck continue to sponsor half of Field Camp I. Two thirds of their \$6000 annual donation supports need-based grants to field camp students and \$2000 of the money defrays field camp expenses for all field camp students regardless of financial need. This half sponsorship and other donations to the Adopt a Field Camper program are making a huge positive difference for our students, who Curt and Laura met at the spring '25 Geology banquet.

In addition, Curt and Laura are sponsoring three \$1000 Geology Promise Scholarships for four years using matching funds from Chevron Corp, as well as a four-year, \$2000 renewable Your Opportunity Scholarship (see photos in separate articles). These scholarships are for incoming freshman geology majors and students taking MinPet I during their sophomore year.

Curt '77 attended graduate school at Iowa State Univ. and worked 36 years for Chevron in Exploration Geology, Development Geology, and the Environmental Management Company. The last four years of his career he supported Chevron's largest asset in Atyrau, Kazakhstan (Tengiz field) as an Environmental Manager to TengizChevroil.



Curt and Laura Peck's adopted field campers in New Mexico, January 2025.



Your adopted Field Camp II students eating a "family meal", June. 2025.

Curt and Laura (UWEC SPED '78) have many stories to tell from this overseas adventure!

Thanks so much to Curt and Laura Peck for generously helping our Geology students!

CHARLIE AND SUE CHRISTOPHER SPONSOR HALF OF FIELD CAMP II

Charlie and Sue Christopher sponsored half of Field Camp II once again in 2025. Their \$3500 annual donation plus a \$1000 match from the Alliant Energy Foundation provides need-based grants to Field Camp II students each year.

Charlie (UWEC Geol minor '74) participated in Dr. Ron Willis' field camp in Wyoming. After helping with a minerals-related surveying project in South Dakota, Charlie decided to attend MATC in Madison to become a surveyor. He was a registered land surveyor with Alliant Energy for 31 years.

Thanks so much to Charlie and Sue Christopher for supporting our field camp students!

STUDENTS RECEIVE GRANTS FROM BRECK AND ERIN JOHNSON RESEARCH FUND

Breck '04 and Erin (UWEC Communication/Journalism '00) Johnson established the Breck and Erin Johnson Geology Grant (#2901) to enhance research projects. Grants may be used to fund travel, geochemistry, thin section prep, research supplies, and travel to a meeting to present research. Bekah Thompson and Renee Jeutter (with supervisor Robert Lodge) and Avery McKeown-Robbie, Jake Cipar, Robin Pence, and Alyssa Nemeroff (with supervisor Phillip Ihinger) received Johnson Research fund grants to support their research. Breck and Erin live with their family in the Denver, CO area. Breck is the Rockies Net Zero Manager at Oxy, and he serves on the UWEC Geology and Environmental Science/RMI Advisory Board. Thanks to Breck and Erin for their generosity!

DONATIONS

HOW TO DONATE

Geology funds with UWEC Foundation are used to support many activities in the Department including student travel to professional meetings, faculty/student field trips, faculty recruitment, and student scholarships. Your gift will be greatly appreciated and used effectively within the Department. In addition to financial support, we also welcome your support by volunteering to speak to our majors/minors about job experiences, offering job opportunities to our students, or donating equipment or field supplies.

During the past year, **98** individuals/companies donated **\$182,183** to the Geology & Environmental Science Foundation accounts. All gifts, large or small, are greatly appreciated! Please consider giving something back to your undergraduate department.

Due to budgetary constraints, alumni gifts to the department's advancement funds are becoming increasingly critical. Therefore, we have been working with the Foundation Office to establish a named lecture series, new scholarships, etc. If you are

interested in establishing a scholarship within the Department of Geology & Environmental Science, here are a few basic guidelines from the Foundation.

- All gifts to the UWEC Foundation are fully tax deductible. You may use cash, checks, credit cards, stocks or other tangible assets to fund a scholarship.

- Two types of scholarships exist: the annual scholarship, which is funded each year, and the endowed scholarship, where principal is invested and only the income is used for the annual scholarship award.

- A minimum commitment of \$2000 is required to establish a named annual scholarship fund.

- A minimum investment of \$30,000 is required to establish an endowed fund; there is no maximum.

- The scholarship name is determined by the donor(s). Most name a scholarship after their family or the name of a loved or honored one. Some have endowed scholarships in the name of a favorite professor.

- Donor(s) may help develop scholarship criteria with the assistance of a development officer. Preferences rather than requirements are most often expressed. Preferences may involve academic major, financial need, academic promise, first-year student or upper-division status.

- IRS regulations prevent donors from designating family members as recipients or from selecting the recipients themselves. Donors will be notified of the recipients.

If you would like more information about making a donation, please contact Kent Syverson at 715/836-3676. If the UWEC Foundation Office calls you asking for a donation, please remember the Geology advancement funds! If you work for a corporation or a geology-related firm, please inquire if your company has a matching program for contributions to academic geology departments.

THANK YOU DEPARTMENT DONORS!

The Department thanks the generous donors listed below who have contributed to Geology Department accounts with UW-Eau Claire Foundation from June 1, 2024, through May 31, 2025.

BECKSTROM GEOLOGY MAJOR SCHOLARSHIP (#1663)

DR. JOHN R. BERGSTROM GEOLOGY SCHOLARSHIP (#2475)

Sandra Chamberlain
- In memory of John Bergstrom
Michael D. Mc Millan
- In memory of John Bergstrom

BRECK AND ERIN JOHNSON GEOLOGY GRANT (#2901)

Breck and Erin Johnson
Oxy

GEOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE ADVANCEMENT FUND (#279)

Alaska Earth Sciences
Barr Engineering Co.
Karl and Sarah Beaster
Mark and Molly Ciardelli
Richard and Amy Conway
Mark Fiore
Samuel Fischer '25
- In honor of Scott Clark
Haley Johannesen '25
Kevin Krenik
Michael Mc Millan
Sarah and Kristian Moore
Steven and Pamela Olson
- In memory of Arnold and Agnes Matz
Steven Pierce
David Risch
Lucas Robarge
Kent and Lila Syverson
- In memory of Ron & Thora Willis
James Tannler
- In memory of Ron & Thora Willis
Terry Tauschmann
Chad and Alison Underwood
Teresa Walter

GEOLOGY FIELD CAMP II SCHOLARSHIP (#2959)

Nancy Haefler
Lois Ristow

GEOLOGY PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP (#2744)

Curt and Laura Peck
Chevron Corporation

GEOLOGY OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP (#2762)

Anonymous

H2O WELL DRILLING & PUMP SERVICE GEOLOGY SCHOLARSHIP (#2612)

Nolan and Miranda Rodriguez

SAMUEL L. HELMUTH MEMORIAL GEOLOGY SCHOLARSHIP (#3065)

Kevin Helmuth
- in memory of Samuel Helmuth

INTERNSHIP ADVANCEMENT GEOLOGY (#2780)

Rachel Fliflet
Steven and Jennifer Hoaglund
Richard and Jacqueline Kopp

JRC APPLIED GEOLOGY SCHOLARSHIP (#2601)

Josh and Molly Carlisle
Mark and Savona Kiessling
Newmont Mining Corp.

FIELD CAMP ADVANCEMENT GEOLOGY & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE (part of the Adopt a Field Camper campaign) -- * indicates adopter of at least one field camper, #2924)

Ian and Christine Anderson
Jeffery and Charlien Baker
- in memory of Ronald Willis
Joseph Balsanek
- in memory of Brian Boudreau
Audrey and Zach Boerner
Michael Bronsdon
Scott and Francine Clark
Conocophillips*
John Dietzler
Carol Eloranta*
Enbridge Foundation
Jacob Erickson*
Claudia Fontana
Kenneth Fredricks
Lillian Glodowski
Gary and Jody Graham
- in memory of Charles Patterson
Kristen Gunderson-Inden
Karen Havholm and Glenn Reynolds*
Brian and Aimee Hennings
David and Teresa Hodek
Cameron Hughes
Retta Isaacson

Jacobs Matching Gift Program

Breck and Erin Johnson*
Dale and Katherine Kerner
Patrick Keicher
Paul Knippel
Phillip Larson
Everett LaBudda and
Madeline Marchiafava
Kirsten Langfield
Matthew Leahy
Jane E. Lindblad
- in honor of William Lindblad
Jane B. and Todd Lindblad*
Taryn Lopez*
- In memory of Charles Lopez
Chloe Malin*
Michael Mc Millan
Gregory Michael
Jean Morrison and Christopher Mills
Roland and Norma Newton
Nathan Nushart*
Oxy*
Duane and Cynthia Paul*
Taylor Pierce*
Heidi Rantala
Mara Reed
Crystal and Andrew Reuss
Katherine Richard
Michelle Roth*
Andrea Scamehorn*
- In honor of Henry Scamehorn
Henry Scamehorn
Michaela Schnell
Daniel Shakked
Laura Strumness*
Lisa and Ronald Struss
Gene and Barbara Thornton*
Sarah Vitale

PAUL MYERS & RONALD WILLIS GEOLOGY FIELD CAMP SCHOLARSHIP (part of the Adopt a Field Camper campaign -- * indicates adopter of at least one field camper, #1633)

Alliant Energy Foundation Inc.*
Jesse Bernhardt*
Nathalie and Paul Brandes
Charles and Susan Christopher*
Conocophillips*
Michael and Robert Cummings*
Thomas Danielson
James and Debra Johnson*
- In memory of John Bergstrom
Ric and Jacqueline Kopp*
- In memory of Ron Willis
Everett LaBudda
Michael Mc Millan
Paul Myers and Welthy Soni-Myers*
Larry and Ellen Nelson*

Roger and Julie Oreskovich
Curtis and Laura Peck*
Steven T. Pierce*
Mitch and Barbara Piper
Michelle Roth*

DAVID L. RISCH GEOLOGY RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP (#2552)

David Risch (endowment gift)
Chevron Corporation
Nicholas and Juli Freiburger

PATHFINDER GEOLOGY & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE SCHOLARSHIP (#3039)

Kevin and Margery Martindale

SOURCE ENERGY SERVICES RESPONSIBLE MINING SCHOLARSHIP (#3094)

Source Energy Services

DECLARED ESTATE PLANS NAMING UWEC GEOLOGY & ENV. SCIENCE FUNDS

Gregory Beckstrom
Charles and Susan Christopher
Paul and Welthy Soni-Myers

IN-KIND CORPORATE SUPPORT OF RESPONSIBLE MINING INITIATIVE

Alaska Earth Sciences
Big Rock Exploration
BKV
Cedar Corp.
Forefront Mining Strategies LLC
Foth Environmental
George Hudak Geosciences
Highland Copper
Integra Resources
Intertek PSI
KGHM
Maptek
Mathy Construction
Milestone Materials
Oxy
Petroleum Connection
Ruder Ware, L.L.S.C.
South Dakota Geological Survey
Stantec
Steele Solutions
Talon Metals
U.S. Silica

DONATION SLIP

Our Geology and Environmental Science Department Advancement Fund is the primary support fund for the department. It is used to support a wide range of activities in the Department including student travel to national meetings, special research and instructional equipment, faculty recruitment, and the seminar program. If you choose, your gift can also be applied in part or total to individual scholarship award funds. See information above for minimum commitments for establishing your own scholarship. Undesignated funds will be credited to the Geology and Environmental Science Department Advancement Fund.

Mailing Address:

UW-Eau Claire Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 1208
Eau Claire, WI 54702-1208
Specify Geology fund name.

Give Online:

connect.uwec.edu/geology
and select a Geology fund option.



Students mapping at Field Camp II, Montana.

University of Wisconsin
Eau Claire
FOUNDATION

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

EMAIL

- \$ _____ Breck and Erin Johnson Geology Grant (#2901)
\$ _____ Beckstrom Geology Major Scholarship (#1663)
\$ _____ Blugold Freshman Geology Scholarship (#2621)
\$ _____ David L. Risch Geology Research Scholarship (#2552)
\$ _____ Dr. John R. Bergstrom Scholarship (#2475)
\$ _____ Emeriti Faculty Scholarship Fund - Unnamed (#1632)
\$ _____ Field Camp Advancement - Geology & Environmental Science fund (#2924) **(Adopt a Field Camper)**
\$ _____ **Geology and Environmental Science Advancement Fund (#279) – For pressing departmental needs**
\$ _____ Geology Field Camp II Scholarship (#2959)
\$ _____ Hydrogeology Advancement (#2271)
\$ _____ Internship Advancement - Geology (#2780)
\$ _____ JRC Applied Geology Scholarship (#2601)
\$ _____ Myers/Willis Field Camp Scholarship Fund (#1633) **(Adopt a Field Camper)**
\$ _____ Pathfinder Geology & Environmental Science Scholarship (#3039)
\$ _____ Samuel L. Helmuth Memorial Geology Scholarship (#3065)
- \$ _____ Total Contribution (tax deductible)

_____ My employer (or my spouse's) will match this gift.

EMPLOYER

_____ I have made plans to benefit the Geology & Environmental Science Department through my estate. Please have someone contact me.

_____ Please send me information about how I might make provisions in my estate to benefit the Geology & Environmental Science Department.

Please indicate how you wish your contribution to be recorded:

- ☐ Record jointly with my spouse _____
☐ Record in my name only
☐ In memory of _____

PAYMENT METHOD

- ☐ My check is enclosed (made payable to UW-Eau Claire Foundation)
☐ If you wish to pay using a **credit card**, please go to connect.uwec.edu/geology and select a Geology fund option.

University of Wisconsin
Eau Claire

DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
105 GARFIELD AVENUE | P.O. BOX 4004
EAU CLAIRE, WI 54702-4004

PG000000557 CC000027 FD0102 FN0200

Non-Profit Org.
U.S Postage
PAID
Permit No. 1557
Eau Claire, WI

A photograph of three students in a field setting. Two students, a woman and a man, are looking at a map held by a third student. They are wearing backpacks and hats. The background shows a large tree and a mountain range under a blue sky.

University of Wisconsin
Eau Claire

Geology and
Environmental Science

DONATE AT [CONNECT.UWEC.EDU/GEOLOGY](https://connect.uwec.edu/geology)
JOIN OUR GROUP ON FACEBOOK | UWEC GEOLOGY

Adopt a **FIELD CAMPER!**