

FYRES Research Mentors 2014-2015

The six excellent Research Mentors for FYRES fall 2014 come from a wide range of majors, from biology and environmental studies to writing, business, and international development. Four of them are previous FYRES students, and two of them are returning FYRES Research Mentors.

Katy Gerber



Katy Gerber is currently a junior double majoring in Environmental Studies and Biology. Originally from Minnesota, growing up in the Land of 10,000 Lakes is what inspired her interest in both the outdoors and environmental issues. As a FYRES student in the fall of 2012, Katy studied the impact of autumn storms on Lake Michigan foredunes. In 2013 her research experience continued in West Africa where she did ethnographic studies on the effectiveness of livestock exchange

programs in the Upper East Region of Ghana. Katy is excited to be back in the geography department this year, working her first year as a FYRES research mentor. She looks forward to new exploration and adventure, both in the field and the classroom. After graduation, Katy hopes to attend graduate school and is contemplating joining the Peace Corps.

Brian Hilbrands

Brian Hilbrands is a senior double majoring in geography and business from Grand Rapids, Michigan. Although he has not had the opportunity to be involved with FYRES before he is excited to be a part of the program this year. In the past year he has had a couple of research opportunities within the GEO department, including creating a GIS database of Michigan dunes with Professors VanHorn and van Dijk. The database has great potential to be used by future Calvin classes including the FYRES course. Over the summer he continued researching for the department, this time with Professor Bascom and fellow mentor Audrey Huey, in working on an online, digital atlas of Ethiopia with the goal of it being used by geography students in Ethiopia. After graduation he hopes to enter into the field of urban planning.



Audrey Hughey

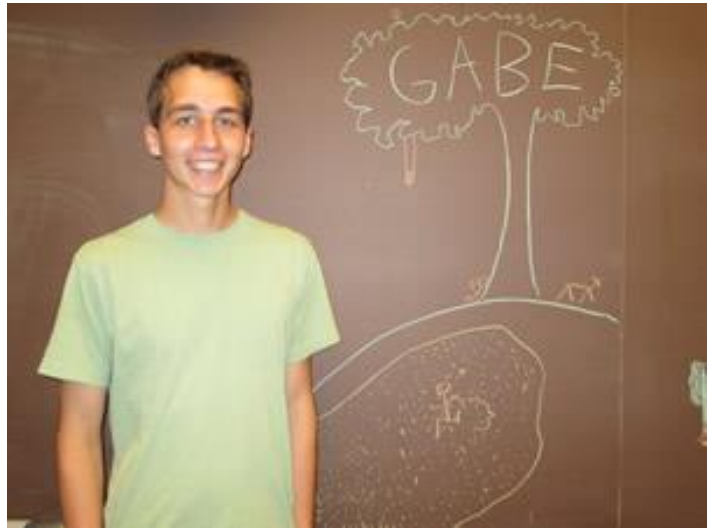


Audrey Hughey is a 5th Year Senior this year with a major in Environmental Studies focused in Geography and a minor in International Development. She was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan but spent much of her childhood in France as a missionary kid. Audrey has done two different research projects with the GEO department previously, one with Professor van Dijk and Professor VanHorn on Lake Michigan dunes in spring 2014 and one with Professor Bascom on a virtual Ethiopian geography textbook

during summer 2014. She has a love of GIS and maps along with a love of nature and people. After finishing Calvin Audrey hopes to pursue work at the intersection of GIS, International Development, indigenous land rights, and environmental stewardship.

Gabe LePage

Gabe LePage is a junior at Calvin College majoring in Geography and International Development Studies. He enjoyed FYRES as a first year student, as it was a great way to get off campus and get to know and love Michigan. He's not from around here- born and raised in Nairobi, Kenya, with his high school years in Tennessee- but he is interested to continue searching out how people relate to their places, both shaping and being shaped by them, and how we can do this in ways that are healthy and worth celebrating. He's looking forward to spending some quality afternoons on the dunes this semester with his fellow FYRES researchers.



Natasha Strydhorst



Natasha Strydhorst is a Writing and Environmental Studies major from Calgary, Alberta (Canada). Her most extensive research project was from last year's Geography 181 class, in which she studied a threatened Pitcher's Thistle population in Rosy Mound Natural Area. The love of the outdoors in general—mountains in particular—is what first drew Natasha to love the environment and Environmental Studies. This will be her second year as a research mentor for Geography 181. Natasha is

looking forward to conducting further research in the amazing environment that is the Lake Michigan coastal dunes.

Jake Swineford

Jake Swineford is from Naperville, Illinois and is a junior this year. He is majoring in Biology with a business minor. This is his second year as a FYRES mentor, and his third year with the program. His freshman year project and mentor project last year studied the effects of storms on a foredune. Jake is highly interested in the natural world, and is excited to research dunes yet again. He hopes to expand his knowledge of dunes and their many processes, and is looking forward to a second great year as a FYRES mentor. After undergraduate work, he plans on pursuing a career in agriculture or ecology.

